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## ARTICLE I.

### ΗΕΠΙ ΑΡΧΩΝ.—ABOUT BEGINNINGS.

HERE is the title of Origen's greatest work. A Latin translation still exists under the name "Libri de Principiis," or "Books of Principles." No other uninspired production has wrought such changes in the state of the Church, or so revolutionized the form of Christian Theology. It made the influence of its author upon the ecclesiastical world to be mightier than that of Constantine upon the civil. For fourteen centuries it was the seed-plot of theological investigation and debate.

That *Ηεπι Αρχων* contains errors and absurdities no one will deny. But, according to the Indian proverb, "A diamond with some flaws is still more precious than a pebble that has none." And whatever blemishes and inconsistencies it may be thought to have, it accomplished one great and good work: it contributed powerfully to *the study and acknowledgment of principles.*

Such a good and great work needs to be accomplished for the present age. Just now the theological skies of New England present striking omens of the need of, and the desire for, a return to the safe anchorage of first principles.

Sacred birds are flying both on the left and on the right, and the priests of augury should be looking out of their windows.

There is boding evil in the popularity of those printed sermons, with their speckled and mottled theology, which have flooded the country of late. Like the iron money of Lycurgus, they are bulky and cheap. While the sermons have been the astonishment of good and thoughtful men, the indiscriminate greediness with which they have been swallowed by multitudes in the churches, with lappings and gappings for more, have grieved and alarmed them.

There is threatening in the scantiness and vagueness of modern church creeds, as well as in the sensitiveness and querulousness with which, in many quarters, the simple inquiry about them has been received. Lengthening the denominational zeal, and the external forms and activities is no compensation for shortening and diluting the creed; for the tree dies not for want of branches and leaves, but for lack of nourishment to its roots. That so many young men are applying for licensure and ordination who possess almost the smallest modicum of *definite* and *positive* theology, evidently relying upon rhetorical style and popular address for their success, certainly portends no good to the Redeemer's cause. Ignorance, in this case, is not only injustice to the world, but ruin to the Church.

While those memorable councils at North Woburn, at Hartford, and Manchester, revealing the possibility and the reality of youth passing up from pious families, through our boasted Sabbath schools, and even through the full course of our popular theological seminaries, without even settling in their hearts the first principles of piety and religion, such as Inspiration, Probation, Atonement, and Judgment, are dark signs of approaching apostasy, bitter conflicts, and separations. That is a weighty aphorism of Coleridge, "He who begins by loving Christianity better than truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or church better than Christianity, and end in loving himself better than all."

But perhaps the darkest and saddest omen to be seen is the contempt and ridicule which some professed ministers of the Gospel pour upon the fundamental principles of the Gospel-system, and upon all who adhere to them and defend and preach them. In their ordination-vows, they have sworn, upon the altars of the Church, that they will "give heed to the doctrine,"

and "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." And yet they unblushingly boast that *they* do not preach doctrines, nor trouble themselves with dry old-fashioned abstractions. What has Calvinism to do with piety? In *their* cultivated congregations, men would run away from these ugly, thought-requiring and trouble-making themes; they could not retain their hearers. *They* are *live, practical* preachers, who go through the world with their eyes open, ("the things which are seen are temporal,") and with facile adaptability, seizing upon the fresh themes of passing life, *they* aim to meet and stir the feelings of the people! Instruction is no longer needed! It was well enough once! Now all have Bibles and books, and know their duty in the abstract! So long as they can keep their congregations large, and active in their sympathies, why should they care what particular principles are believed? Only let there be piety towards men, and piety towards God, — fidelity to his revealed will, — will take care of itself! How glibly they denounce heresy-hunting, and with what original talent they can follow their arch-leader in provoking a smile at "dead orthodoxy," "the vinegar-faced evangelicals," or, if all else fail, "Total Depravity"! Their theology and theory of ecclesiastical history do not teach *them* that man's carnal nature is so averse to the divine counsel as to render eternal vigilance the price of a sound scriptural faith; and so they are credulous, bold, and ridicule the very idea of danger. The thief would have you leave your doors unbarred, and the simple believe his cry of peace, peace. Well has it been said, "Men that know nothing in sciences have no doubts."

And, alas, there are society majorities that love to have it so. Says Bacon, "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure." In this way any house may be filled by a cunning caterer. The demand will create the supply. The curse of apostate Israel was, at one time, "There shall be, like people, like priest; and [so] I will punish them for their ways, and reward them their doings." Young America is allowed to rule out the piety and experience of mature age. Strong meat is at a discount, and the clamor is for baby-diet and boy-preaching. Says an Arab proverb, "Experience is the key of knowledge, as credulity is the gate of error."

But we are not disposed to be gloomy and despairing. Though these evils have been poured out upon us thick and fast of late, we trust it is because the Pandora box is well-nigh exhausted, as people come faster out of a church when it is nearly empty than when a crowd is at the door. Moreover, along with these evil omens there are many signs of good; some of them are specially encouraging as indicating a pretty general discovery of the *spring* of the bitter streams, and a determination to apply the remedy at the fountain-head.

Many Christian clergymen and laymen are earnestly seeking to restore the saving principles of the Gospel system, as the prophet cast salt into the spring of the waters at Jericho, where the school of the prophets was. Many are feeling the aching void which the smooth and flowery, or at best, mere hortatory periods, from many a pulpit, leave behind them. Many hearers are hungering and thirsting for the thorough instruction, the full and plain presentation of the old and mighty truths which made giants of our Puritan Fathers, as the basis of right and deep feeling, and of earnest practical life.

Their desire is, not so much that the principles of the Gospel shall be preached after the same old scholastic models, as that they be preached *substantially*, and *actually*, underlying and forming the vital substance of every sermon. We do not believe that a mind that abandons all logic, however brilliant and gorgeous its rhetorical acquirements, is a safe instructor and guide in that most perfect and greatest of all systems, the Gospel. But if a minister of Christ is not satisfied with the patterns of Paul's cogent reasonings and clear abstract demonstrations of truth, then let him set before him the still higher models of the Lord Jesus, in the warm, glowing life-pictures of the same great doctrines which Paul set forth more didactically. For where are the distinguishing doctrines brought out half so vividly and overwhelmingly as in the sermons and parables of Christ? Who ever presented so clearly and boldly as he did man's Apostasy and utter Depravity, Repentance, Faith, Regeneration by the Holy Ghost, Divine Sovereignty, Election, Eternal Decrees, human Freedom and Responsibility, Judgment and Eternal Damnation? He did not cause "the offence of the cross to cease," for those of his hearers who



would not repent gnashed upon him with their teeth. The sermon on the mount is full of doctrines; scarcely one of them all is omitted from its deep and solid substratum. It was the hated doctrine of God's *sovereign* grace which he was preaching in his native village of Nazareth, when all they in the synagogue were filled with wrath, and rose up, not allowing him to finish his discourse, thrust him out of the city, and led him to the brow of the hill to cast him down headlong. And no preacher ever drew the lines so distinctly between the penitent and believing on the one hand, and the impenitent and self-righteous on the other; or made the strait gate so narrow, and the crooked way so broad, as did the greatest preacher, the Son of God. It is a desire, deepening and increasing in the churches, to return substantially to these models for the study and preaching of *principles*, that is so encouraging an omen in the New England skies.

We have at hand also other presages of good in the significant calls of State Associations for a return to principles.

At the last meeting of the General Association of Massachusetts there was a refreshing variety of assertion of doctrinal soundness in the reports from the local associations, and in the various discussions, as if there was a felt necessity of reassurance. There was, however, one strangely discordant note from a corresponding body. A professor of Christian Theology, in a letter, insinuates that to "earnestly contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," specially to question any one's soundness, is but "quarrelling and arid speculations." Then we could dispense with *some* of our theological professors, certainly!

He says, "Our ministers and churches, without suspicion or jealousy, believe each other sound in the faith and devoted to the Master. We have too great a work to do and too little strength with which to do it, to permit us to waste our energies in quarrelling, or to leave us any time for arid speculations which minister questions rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

"Believing each other to be sound in the faith" is what might easily be said of any denomination, Jews or Mahomedans; but it is not quite so satisfactory as the taking of a little precious time and energy to know. Too busy, too great

a work for the Master, to care much what exactly the Master taught! We thought of Jehu, who said, "Come see my zeal for the Lord," while inspiration says of him, "But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart: for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin." Yet the general tone of the meeting was unusually encouraging to the cause of truth.

Again,—At the meeting of the General Association of Connecticut, held in Rockville, June 19, 1860, the following resolutions were passed and ordered to be published in five religious papers:

"Whereas, it appears that sundry pulpits of Congregational Churches in this State are occupied on the Lord's Day for public preaching, by persons without commendation, as competent for such service, by any Association of Pastors, or other proper body, according to our usage and order—and whereas this practice tends to the perversion of a pure Gospel—to the disgrace of the Sanctuary, and the dishonor of the Christian ministry, therefore,

"Resolved, That we, in General Association, do express our disapprobation of this irregularity, and warn the Churches against employing any man as a public preacher of the Divine Word, unless accredited by a formal certificate of his examination and approval, by some body of ordained Christian Pastors and Teachers.

"Resolved, Further, that we recommend to the Associations represented in this General Association, greater carefulness in the examination of those desiring to be commended to the Church as suitable candidates for the Gospel ministry, and the adoption of a rule not to entertain such requests, unless proof is given that the applicant has spent two years in diligent preparation for the Christian ministry in some Theological Seminary or its equivalent."

But the most significant omen is the resolution adopted by the Pastoral Union of Connecticut, at its annual meeting, July 18, 1860. The resolution was offered by Rev. Elias R. Beadle, of Hartford, and was passed in the most emphatic manner, the members rising to their feet and standing:

"Resolved, That in consideration of the growing laxness in doctrine and practice which prevails in the licensing of candidates, and ordaining men as pastors over the Churches, we do solemnly reaffirm the articles of faith adopted as the basis of this Pastoral Union, and that, in our opinion, it is inconsistent with Christian integrity and good faith to license candidates for the Gospel ministry, and to ordain men who cannot cordially assent to the doctrines of the Westminster Catechism."

Here is a very important utterance. This influential body of pastors is prepared openly and solemnly to testify that there is a "growing laxness in doctrine and practice;" and that the remedy is to be found in a closer adherence to the doctrines of the Westminster Catechism.

*There is a close and indissoluble connection between "doctrine and practice;" and we shall be justified in a fresh attempt to satisfy more fully both clergymen and thoughtful reading laymen, that there is a vital necessity for the earnest and unremitting study of principles in religion.*

*The statement of what is meant by principles will help us to see the prominence which must ever be given to them.*

The word is from the Latin, *principium*, beginning. More, however, is implied than the source, origin, or cause of anything. It is the *operative* cause, — that which *produces*. Thus we have the principle of motion, the principles of action. The soul of man is said to be an active principle; and resentment is a principle of human nature. Even in the more general use of the term, for opinions, tenets; that which is believed, whether true or not, the same element of *energy* is necessarily included. The principles of the Stoics, or of the Epicureans, being believed, serve as rules of action and bases of systems; and so were *operative* causes, producing evil. Whatever power, whether for good or evil, there is in any system, inheres in the *principles* of that system.

The principles of science are the originating, guiding, and producing *causes* of the arts. Dead principles are a contradiction, an absurdity. That which is dead produces nothing, and so excludes the idea of principles. Principles also contain the main facts, the elements of a system. They are the constituent parts, the foundations which support all assertion and action. The principles of language, *e. g.* are its grammar. Not the mere formulas of the books; but the hidden, springing powers which these formulas strive to define, and which necessarily govern the speaker, whether consciously or unconsciously. They are wrought into the speaker's or writer's mind so as to underlie and form the warp of all he says and writes. When he turns aside from, or ambitiously rises above, these elements, he is no longer using language, but gabbling.

So the instant a speaker or writer steps clear from religious doctrines, perhaps under the plea of being practical, his language is no longer religious in the least. It may be literary, it may be sentimental, or poetic, it may please, but it is wholly without spiritual life, and beyond the pale of the Divine promise and blessing.

In the arts, principles are those general and fundamental truths from which all art is deduced. Under each art particular principles lie, shaping and supporting everything which can relate to that particular art. The difference between music and painting is a difference in principles, or producing causes. In the one, principles of harmony and rhythm rule; in the other, principles of perspective and coloring. So also with agriculture, manufactures, and all the arts of life.

The whole system of chemistry is built upon the principle of the combination of elements in definite proportions. It is the principle of crystalization that causes all the wide difference between diamond and charcoal. Both are pure carbon. The principles of science and nature are all exact and inevitable in their operations. And religion is a perfect system, its Author being the same with Nature's. The grass, the flowers, the medicinal shrubs, and the poisonous plants, all grow and develop their natures and powers by fixed principles and operative laws. The planets and starry worlds move on in their orbits and observe their seasons and changes by the nicest and most unvarying laws.

What would be thought of the scholar or teacher who should boast of great liberality in his interpretation and belief in the principles of science, having but vague and indefinite views of them, and regarding them as of little importance, in his zeal for the practical and substantial? What downright empiricism would the artist or the physician display, and what distrust and scorn would they merit, who should abandon the guide of established principles, and give themselves up to the capricious currents of impulse and appearance!

Not less truly or potentially are the principles of revealed and experimental religion general laws and guiding truths, which comprehend and control all the subordinate parts and practical results of Christian life. Whatever of life and power are to

be found in practical religion, are to be found as the results of principles. And when a preacher bases his discourse upon no definite and clear doctrine to give it support and shape, let him not wonder that he loses all *religious* power over his congregation. He is taking his stand upon animal feeling, upon science, philosophy, or he is adroitly attempting to balance himself upon little or nothing. He is catering to the sickly appetite of that numerous class of persons who, in their large liberality and morbid desire for the new and the practical, are willing to attend upon the ministry of almost any man who "dispenses with the Gospel." If he be a man of great, specially of eccentric, talent, he is performing a grand Blondin feat, and multitudes eagerly shout, "May we be there to see."

Religious principles are just as truly realities as that religion is real; they are its very *life*, supporting and guiding all the assertions and revealings of moral truth and of religious character and conduct. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do!" Take away, or remove into the background any of the great principles of revealed religion, and how soon the whole system crumbles, and falls shapeless, its potential spirit vanishing "like the baseless fabric of a vision."

The existence and character of God, once allowed to fade and grow indistinct to the mind, corruption of morals, idolatry, and heathenish superstition inevitably follow, as night follows the setting sun. The mind of man is so constituted that its idea of God and his attributes forms its highest possible conception of moral excellence. As the stream can rise no higher than its fountain, so the aim and character of man can rise no higher than his conceptions of the Divine Being. There is found no other means of elevating and civilizing a benighted nation than unfolding the knowledge of God clearly to the mind. All else fails but the preaching of God, God manifested in Christ, God in his attributes, God in his law, in his government, in his works, and in his ultimate aims and eternal purposes.

In a Christian society, let God's character be blemished by being partially seen, and darkness and chilliness rest over that society, as when the sun is behind a cloud; let God cease to

be recognized as a Being who desires and determines to inflict punitive and remediless retribution upon the irreclaimable sinner, and speedily the baleful influence spreads, like a subtle plague, through all the social, educational, and civil relations. Human laws now begin to substitute expediency — reformation — and protection — for immutable morality and absolute justice. The “*unfortunate*” culprit, pitied more than his victims, now grows bold in sin. Parental authority is prostrated; and preachers, dropping out the terrors of the divine law, begin to mutter and peep about a substitute for their present success, in a possible future probation. Such is the sure result of ignorance of, or inattention towards any of the various attributes of the Divine Being.

There is no restraint upon the mind of man equal to an impressive sense of the omniscience and omnipresence of God. By the truthfulness and faithfulness of God, men come to learn the intrinsic value of uprightness and fidelity. His patience and forgiveness are the highest, if not the only original, pattern and source of patience and forgiveness of man towards man.

In like manner all the great doctrines of grace are beginnings, principles, producing and guiding causes. The fact of man's depravity precedes, and prepares the way for, all appreciation of the Atonement. “They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.” How superficial to talk of preaching Christ, without thoroughly and effectually preaching human apostasy and ruin! Nor is it enough to preach now and then on the “*exceeding sinfulness of sin.*” Men must be convinced, and made to feel most deeply, that *they* are exceeding sinful. And this the natural and deceitful heart is very slow to believe and feel. It is sure to rise in rebellion against him who asserts and presses these producing principles.

The doctrine of divine sovereignty is a powerful producing cause of submission and humility in man. And what is more essential to the spirit of Christian meekness, than the rooting out, and slaying, of a haughty and unyielding pride. Where pride begins, all piety ends.

The doctrine of Foreordination and Decrees is calculated to repress the audacity of the rebellious. “God would have the wicked know, that they cannot outreach him — that with all

their malignity, they cannot even sin but he will foil them." Their wrath shall praise him. Moreover, if this principle is rejected or neglected, Christians must suffer great loss in the sustainment of their faith in times of bold wickedness, and in the consolations which they need in their sore inward conflicts with sin.

Thus it is with all the great principles of the Christian system. They are vital to the system, and cannot be separated from it without fatal effects, any more than the vital principle in the human body can be separated from the body without producing death.

What then are we to think of the mental deficiencies of the religious teacher who can call doctrine "the skin of truth set up and stuffed;" most grossly mistaking the mere outward expression and form, for the living, moving thing itself, and who has never yet caught a glimpse of the real meaning of doctrine or principle? I pity the man who can find nothing but husks in corn. He must be, where the Prodigal was once, feeding with the swine.

And those preachers who affect such horror of "dead orthodoxy," how shallow must their philosophy be, if they can only conceive of producing causes as dead things! Do they always think of animals as dead corpses, or things that have ceased to be animals? An animal is defined to be an organized body endowed with life, sensation, and voluntary motion. We feel pity for them, but we must remove from under them their oft quoted and whole Scripture foundation, by telling them that in the passage translated, "Who hold the truth in unrighteousness," Paul evidently means to say, "Who hold *back*, or *hinder*, the truth by unrighteousness;" for he is speaking of those whom God had given over because "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge," *i. e.* they were opposers of doctrines.

But there is lamentable reason to fear that there are greater deficiencies than the mental and superficial in those who can sneer at, or encourage, or even allow others to sneer at, the principles of the Gospel system. Coleridge somewhere says that there is very little difference between men without principles, and unprincipled men. There is a close relation be-



tween doctrine and practice, between true piety and the affectionate perception of the vital principles of the religious system. "Put on the new man which is renewed in *knowledge*." — Col. 3: 10. "I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in *knowledge*, and in all *judgment*!" — Phil. 1: 9. Intelligent piety must be proportionate to the knowledge and love of the distinguishing truths of Christianity. "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and *belief of the truth*." — 2 Thesa. 2: 13.

We do not forget that religion consists chiefly in the affections, as President Edwards, in his book on the affections, so clearly establishes. Neither do we forget that Edwards says, in the same work: "Truly spiritual and gracious affections *ARISE from the understanding being enlightened* as to what is taught respecting God and Jesus Christ; so that we clearly discover the glorious nature of God, and obtain new views of Christ in his fulness and divine excellencies. Those things which *RELATE* to the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, are presented to our minds with a new aspect, in consequence of which we now understand those holy and divine *doctrines* which before were *foolishness* to us." . . . . "As soon as our eyes are opened to behold the holy beauty and glory of divine things, *a number of most important doctrines of the Gospel, which appear strange to natural men, are at once perceived to be true.* As, for instance, the truth of what God declares concerning the exceeding evil of sin, is perceived; for the same light which shows the transcendent beauty of holiness, necessarily shows the exceeding odiousness of sin. A person thus enlightened discovers his own sinfulness; he perceives the dreadful pollution of his heart, and, in consequence, is convinced of the truth of what the Scriptures declare concerning *the corruption of human nature*, our absolute need of a Saviour, and of *the mighty power of God to renew the heart*. Upon discovering the beauty of holiness, we perceive the glory of those perfections which both reason and Scripture attribute to the Divine Being. Having a clear view of the glorious perfections of Deity, we are easily convinced of the truth of what the Scriptures declare as to the dreadful punishment annexed to sin, the impossibility of our making any satisfaction to the injured justice of God,



and our need of an atonement of infinite value, for the purpose of making that satisfaction."

As I know of no human authority higher than Edwards, on this very important point, I will venture another quotation. "*The mind of man is naturally full of enmity against the doctrines of the Gospel*, and this produces a powerful disadvantage as to those arguments which prove their truth. But when a person has the transcendent excellency of divine things manifested to him, his enmity is destroyed, his prejudices removed, and his reason sanctified. Hence arises a vast difference as to the force of arguments in convincing the mind. Hence arose the very different success which attended the miracles of Christ in convincing his disciples, from what they had in convincing the Scribes and Pharisees. The minds of his disciples were *not more CULTIVATED, but they were SANCTIFIED.*"

It is plain, then, that when an *educated* man, and especially one who has had the advantages of a *Christian* education, finds "those holy and divine doctrines" to be "foolishness unto him;" if they are strange and unwelcome to him, especially if he finds his mind full of "enmity" towards them, ready to give them a sly thrust, or ready to join in the laugh when others ridicule them, and to run after and praise the treacherous reviler, it is plain that such an one must be yet, like Simon the Sorcerer, "in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." How can it be otherwise, if the doctrines are, as we have shown, the very Beginnings, the Producing Causes, the Vital Principles of the system of grace!

I know it will at once occur to the reader that many persons, who think very little of doctrinal principles, appear to be very pious and active Christians; they are fervent in prayer, zealous in service, and often all alive to the interests of their church or denomination. I admit that great allowance must be made for mental and educational peculiarities and deficiencies. Some real Christians have in their hearts what they cannot express in language, and what they would not recognize in expression, and even what, in terms, their prejudices would lead them to repudiate. I fully subscribe to the language of Coleridge in his introduction to "Aids to Reflection."

"That a man may be truly religious, and essentially a

believer at heart, while his understanding is sadly bewildered with the attempt to comprehend and express philosophically, what yet he feels and knows spiritually. It is indeed impossible for us to tell, how far the understanding may impose upon itself by partial views and false disguises, without perverting the will, or estranging it from the laws and the authority of reason and the Divine Word. We cannot say to what extent a false system of philosophy and metaphysical opinions, which in their natural and uncounteracted tendency would go to destroy all religion, may be received in a Christian community, and yet the power of spiritual religion retain its hold and its efficacy in the hearts of the people. We may perhaps believe that, in opposition to all the might of false philosophy, so long as the great body of the people have the Bible in their hands, and are taught to reverence its heavenly instructions, though the Church may suffer injury from unwise and unfruitful speculations, it will yet be preserved; and that the spiritual seed of the Divine Word, though mingled with many tares of worldly wisdom and philosophy falsely so called, will yet spring up, and bear fruit unto everlasting life. But though we may hope and believe this, we cannot avoid believing, at the same time, that injury must result from an unsuspecting confidence in metaphysical opinions, which are essentially at variance with the doctrines of Revelation. Especially must the effect be injurious where those opinions lead gradually to alter our views of religion itself, and of all that is peculiar in the Christian system."

While therefore we would yield to none in the importance of discriminate charitable judgment, we cannot allow charity to become a blind fool. We are constrained to see that many persons have naturally amiable and ardent dispositions, combined with a rather obtuse indiscriminating intellect, which may deceive themselves and others into the pleasant belief that they are the veritable spiritual successors of the apostle John. They are very charitable and very goodish. The language of the Scriptures and the views and judgments which God pronounces, sound rather harsh to them, and they think must have been specially intended for earlier and less cultivated ages.

"Love is the great thing. When men come up to judgment,

it will not be asked them what particular views they held, but how much they loved Christ and their fellow-men." *They* do not believe there can be any serious danger from error. "Who should *want* to promote error? If men *say* they are orthodox, and *mean* to be orthodox, why they *are* orthodox, and we can not away with these suspicions of false doctrine which are only calculated to trouble Israel and hinder our denomination."

What should hinder such persons from being deceived, even though they occupy high positions and possess peculiarly popular talents. We cannot wink out of sight the serious fact that unconverted Paul was a very sincere and correct man, a very zealous denominationalist, a champion of Judaism. An unregenerate heart may ardently love, and zealously serve an imaginary god and a false gospel. How then are we to distinguish, and what shall be signs of an unrenewed state, unless secret hatred, (that deep, instinctive antagonism which will now and then break through the forms of restraint and concealment,) of the principles of the Gospel, or at least the foolishness of those principles to them, be a *very dark one*?

Dr. Thomas Scott discovered his unrenewed state years after he entered the ministry. In his "Force of Truth," he attributes his delusion and blasphemous course to false doctrines, and his recovery to the correction of his doctrinal belief. "Being, however, an utter stranger to the depravity and helplessness of fallen nature, I had no doubt but I could amend my life whenever I pleased." . . . "A Socinian comment on the Scriptures came in my way, and I greedily drank the poison, because it quieted my fears, and flattered my abominable pride. The whole system coincided exactly with my inclinations and the state of my mind, and approved itself to me. In reading this exposition, sin seemed to lose its native ugliness, and appear a very small and tolerable evil; man's imperfect obedience seemed to shine with an almost divine excellency; and God appeared so entirely and necessarily merciful, that he could not make any of his creatures miserable, without contradicting his natural propensities. These things influenced my mind so powerfully, that I concluded that, notwithstanding a few little blemishes, I was, upon the whole, a very worthy creature. Then, further, the mysteries of the Gospel being explained away, or brought

down to the level of man's comprehension, by such proud and corrupt, though specious reasonings; by acceding to these sentiments, I was, in my own opinion, in point of understanding and discernment, exalted to a superiority above the general run of mankind; and amused myself with looking down with contempt upon such as were weak enough to believe the Orthodox doctrines."

As to his recovery, every means failed to shake his vain confidence till he resolved "to search the Word of God with this single intention, to discover whether the articles of the Church of England in general, and this creed (the Athanasian) in particular, were, or were not, agreeable thereto. . . . And the first passage, as I remember, which made me suspect that I might be wrong, was James 1: 5. 'If any of you lack wisdom,' &c. . . . Shortly after I meditated upon, and preached from, John 7: 16, 17. 'My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me: if any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.'"

Substantially the same is true of Dr. Chalmers. It was fatal mistake in regard to the principles of the Gospel that made the first seven years of his preaching a profitless and impenitent ministry. Says his biographer, "Over the central doctrine of Christianity, which tells of the sinner's free justification before God through the merits of his Son, there hung an obscuring mist. . . . More than a year of fruitless toil, hard to be described, ere the true ground of a sinner's acceptance with God was reached, and the true principle of all acceptable obedience was implanted in his heart."

Is it not apparent, therefore, that principles must ever hold a prominent place in religion? Should not the conviction be deep and abiding, both with clergymen and laymen, that there is a vital necessity for the earnest and unremitting study of the *Beginnings*, the *Producing Causes*, of Christian character and life?

Is it not essential that the great, supporting and guiding facts of the Gospel system should hold the central position both in the preaching and reading of Christians? If they have been the means of opening the eyes, changing the whole character and life, of unrenewed clergymen, why would they not have a similar effect upon self-deceived laymen? In what other way could

false professions be prevented and detected so effectually? May not this subject help to explain the low state of piety in many a proud and worldly church? In one thing, at least, Mr. Finney is right. He says, in his "Lectures on Revivals," "a minister will never produce a revival, if he does not indoctrinate his hearers."

We are as sure that a minister will never make his church-members *steadfast* if he does not indoctrinate them. How can they come to act from religious principle rather than feeling and impulse, if they have little knowledge and appreciation of the principles of religion? Of the three thousand souls that were added to the Church on the day of Pentecost, it is said, "They continued steadfast in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship," and in Christian duty. And the reason is manifest. They were converted under emphatically *doctrinal preaching*. In the brief account of Peter's sermon, five or six of the distinguishing doctrines of the Gospel are pointedly presented. The special and efficient agency of the Holy Spirit; foreordination and decrees; free-agency in guilt; the resurrection; and the exaltation of Christ. According to the inspired record, Peter does not at all exhort the people to repent until after they are "pricked in their heart," by the clear presentation of doctrines.

It has ever been, to us, one of the strangest facts, that many ministers who profess to believe and value the doctrines, should yet argue against the preaching of them.

Perhaps this is the clearest mark of distinction between the new and the old theology, at the present time. The friends of the former, upon one plea or another, either openly or practically, deny the necessity and utility of preaching many of the doctrines; just as it was in the beginning of the apostasy to Unitarianism. They have an easy, inoperative belief of them; and "credulity is the gate of error." They can state the doctrines, and give the common proofs for them, but they seem to have no deep experience of their vitalizing power. They do not seem to possess the doctrines in their hearts; or, rather, the doctrines do not seem to possess them with any strong and controlling grasp, and so they make very little use of them in preaching. "The doctrine which enters only into the eye or the ear, is like the repast that one takes in a dream."

We are not the advocates of any narrow school, or exclusive, dogmatic sect in theology. Least of all would we magnify a few of the doctrines to the neglect of others. We ardently desire that the *whole* Gospel be preached, Christ ever in the centre, and all doctrines as they relate to him and his cross. Nor would we allow for a moment that preaching should be doctrinal *as opposed* to practical. The doctrine which is not preached practically is not preached truly; there is no such doctrinal preaching in the Bible. The proper end of all doctrine is practice; its preaching is the plowing of the spiritual furrow, and planting the seeds which shall spring up and bear abundant harvest. We have shown that principles are *producing* causes. What can be more practical and moving than convincing men that they are lost sinners, in the way to hell? It is like convincing a convivial party that they are in a burning building. Your exhortations to them to escape are unnecessary. Only open to them the door of escape by preaching the Atonement and all the doctrines of the cross.

Does any one inquire, would you blame a congregation for not relishing dry, abstract doctrines? I answer, it is a very suspicious circumstance that doctrines should be the only, or the peculiarly dry, abstract things; there must be great wrong in the preacher or hearers, or both. Let the heart of the minister and the hearer be in sympathy with the doctrine, and nothing is so kindling and affecting. It is these doctrinal facts that concern the soul, and they, if anything, will have interest for him. They will rouse the man, if it be only to opposition.

But is there not often at the bottom of this hiding the truth, and shrinking from the doctrines, a secret distrust of the Divine economy, as though some parts would not bear the open light; as if the Bible teachings could not be fully defended, but must be kept out of sight, or apologized for, lest it should cause God to suffer in the good opinions of men? Is it not an attempt to modify and improve upon the man-offending system which God has set forth? Surely it is a policy whose mistake is only exceeded by its guilt.

Says Bacon, "It will be acknowledged, even by those that practice it not, that clear and round dealing is the honor of man's nature, and that mixture of falsehood is like alloy in coin

of gold and silver, which may make the metal work the better, but it embaseth it; for these winding and crooked courses are the goings of the serpent, which goeth basely upon the belly, and not upon the feet."

Is it dealing fairly by God's glorious Gospel, which is "the power of God unto salvation," if in preaching it we make it to differ so little from man's false gospels; if our sermons, a *large* proportion of them, might be just as well preached by Universalists and Unitarians? What is gained by drawing the people away from false churches if it is accomplished by preaching very much as the false preachers do?

Ah! it will be found, in the end, to be a profitless labor, which God will not own, though the pews, for a time, be filled, and a kind of popularity achieved. "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord." "Seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not."

That frank confession of Dr. Chalmers should instruct and warn every preacher who fails of a full and plain presentation of the doctrines of the Gospel.

"For a greater part of the time I could expatiate upon the meanness of dishonesty, or the villany of falsehood, or the despicable arts of calumny; in a word, upon all those deformities of character which awaken the natural indignation of the human heart against the pests and disturbers of human society. . . . But the most interesting part is, that during the whole period in which I made no attempt against the natural enmity of the mind to God; while I was inattentive to the way in which this enmity was dissolved, even by the free offer on the one hand, and the believing acceptance on the other, of the gospel of salvation; while Christ, through whose blood the sinner, who by nature stands afar off, is brought near to the heavenly Lawgiver whom he has offended, was scarcely ever spoken of, or was spoken of in such a way as stripped him of all the importance of his character and his offices; even at this time, I certainly did press the reformations of honor and truth and integrity among the people, but *I never once heard of any such reformations being effected among them.* . . . I am not



sensible that all the vehemence with which I urged the virtues and the proprieties of social life, had the weight of a feather on the moral habits of my parishioners."

But not only should ministers give a central and high position to religious principles. They should be the earnest and constant study of the members of the churches. They are in their nature vitalizing and stimulating to the Christian. They are calculated to detect errors and hypocrisies, and to make the believing steadfast, unmovable. They enable him to give "a reason for the hope that is in him." True religion consists in right views, producing right feelings and conduct. Laymen are called to attend councils for the examination of candidates for ordination. Upon them devolves the choice of pastors over the churches. It is important that they should be able to tell "what aileth" the man who hesitates and stumbles at the fundamental principles of the Gospel, and who seems to have spent most of his time in preparation for the ministry, in learning shrewdly to set aside or neutralize most of the creed of the Fathers.

Here, then, is a wide and important field for the study and reading of laymen. Why should not they be *readers*, yea *writers*, in theological reviews, adapted not so much to curious speculations, to rare classical research, and foreign scholarship, as to the pressing wants and demands of the Church in its struggles with error and sin, and its toils to hasten the Redeemer's kingdom. It is no narrow, sectarian study which we invite and urge the ministry and membership of the churches to enter. It is broader than denomination, it is wide and liberal as is the basis of truth and righteousness. It will be *enobling* and *successful*, though against much opposition. For are we not warranted in believing that the next grand step towards the millennium must be accompanied by a truer, deeper, and more general indoctrination of the membership of Christ's body into the principles of the Gospel as taught in the Word of God.



## ARTICLE II.

## CYPRIAN'S LETTER TO FIDUS;

## OR, THE SIXTY-SIX BISHOPS ON INFANT BAPTISM.

IT was A. D. 253 that a large meeting of African bishops was held at Carthage. It was one of those informal meetings in the Ancient Church, held occasionally at convenient centres, by the bishops of the surrounding region. They met for mutual improvement, and for the consideration of any topic that might come up concerning the welfare of the Church. Such meetings were not ecclesiastical, like those of synods or of councils, but only ministerial. They were not called by any authority of the Church, nor yet to do any specific or previously arranged work. As bishops of the district, they came together of their own accord, much after the manner and for the purposes of a clerical association of our own day.

At this meeting, held in Carthage, sixty-six bishops were present. What other topics were raised for consultation we are not informed; but Fidus, a country bishop, presented by letter two questions. One was, whether an infant might receive baptism before it was eight days old.

The question is accompanied with an argument on the negative by Fidus. He urges that earlier than the eighth day the new-born would seem to be so unfinished and unclean that men would revolt from giving it the usual kiss of welcome into the Church. He makes much also of the fact that circumcision was prescribed for the eighth day, and insists that the rule of initiation in that form should hold in this. And other things he urges against the baptism of an infant before its eighth day.

The question and argument of Fidus seem to have been very fully discussed by the bishops, and their result was unanimous. The duty of condensing their opinion, and making reply to their inquirer, was devolved on Cyprian. This letter of Cyprian to Fidus is preserved. In the editions of his works by Parmelius and by the Benedictines, it is the Fifty-Ninth Epistle; in the Oxford edition of Bishop Fell, it is the Sixty-Fourth.

We make a few quotations from this letter.

"..... As to the case of infants; whereas you judge that they must not be baptized within two or three days after they are born, and that the rule of circumcision is to be observed, so that none should be baptized and sanctified before the eighth day after he is born; we were all in our assembly of the contrary opinion (*longe aliud in concilio nostro omnibus visum est*). For as for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind, but all of us, on the contrary, judged that the grace and mercy of God is to be denied to no person that is born. .... And whereas you say, that an infant in the first days after its birth is unclean, so that any of us abhor to kiss it, we think not this neither to be any reason to hinder the giving to it the heavenly grace. For it is written, 'to the clean all things are clean.' .... We judge that no person is to be hindered from obtaining the grace by the law that is now appointed, and that the spiritual circumcision ought not to be restrained by the circumcision that was according to the flesh. .... If the greatest offenders, and they that have grievously sinned against God before, have, when they afterward came to believe, forgiveness of their sins, and no person is kept off from baptism and the grace, how much less reason is there to refuse an infant, who being newly born, has no sin, save that being descended from Adam according to the flesh, he has from his very birth contracted the contagion of the death anciently threatened. .... This, therefore, dear brother, was our opinion in the assembly, that it is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God, who is merciful and kind, and affectionate to all. Which rule, as it holds for all, so we think it more especially to be observed in reference to infants and persons newly born, to whom our help and the divine mercy is rather to be granted, because by their weeping and wailing at their first entrance into the world, they do intimate nothing so much as that they implore compassion." We have used here, for convenience, the fair translation of Dr. Wall, (*Hist. Inf. Bap.* 1: 129-32.)

This Epistle of the martyr-bishop of Carthage is worthy of a few special notes. As a witness concerning the ordinance of infant baptism, it has a leading and commanding place on the stand among the ancients. We make six points in the outline and bearings of this testimony.

1. The Epistle itself is a genuine Epistle of Cyprian. — It is a convenient and no rare thing to break the force of evidence from the Fathers by allusions to the mutilations and interpolations by which some of their works have been dishonored.

So Danvers, in his "Treatise of Baptism," being unable to resist the force of this Epistle, if admitted to be genuine, attempts to make his position good against the ordinance, thus :

"We would rather believe that these things were foisted into his writings by that villanous, cursed generation, that so horribly abused the writings of most of the ancients."

But this Epistle of Cyprian is as well authenticated as any work whatever of the Fathers. Without attempting to exhaust the evidence on this point, it is enough to say, that Jerome and Augustine have quoted it so freely, that almost every passage of it may be found in their works. Jerome alone quotes the most of it in the Third Book of his Dialogue against the Pelagians. Augustine, in his Fourth Book against the Two Epistles of the Pelagians, quotes it extensively, and also in his work on the merits and remission of sins. And in one of his letters to Jerome, the Twenty-Eighth, he says, "Blessed Cyprian, not making any new decree, but expressing the firm faith of the Church, in refuting those that thought a child must not be baptized before the eighth day, said," &c.

So in their times this Epistle was known and received as the genuine production of Cyprian. And they lived so near to his times that we cannot suppose it possible that they were duped by it as a forgery. Cyprian's Letter to Fidus is therefore a lawful chapter in church history.

2. The Question submitted by Fidus to the bishops.—It is sometimes the case that a question gives more information than its full answer. It is so in this case. The inquiry is an ample revelation on the subject of infant baptism in the third century. In it Fidus assumes the validity and universality of the ordinance. It is no part of his inquiry, whether the ordinance shall be administered. By the very terms in which he puts it, the question concedes this. The Scriptural authority for the ordinance, or its propriety, does not lie with any doubt in his own mind, or lead him to ask for light from his brethren in the African ministry. A question so precise, and so sharp in its point, could arise only where infant baptism was, by common consent, assumed, granted, and practised, as a Christian ordinance. It is simply a question of time. May the rite be administered before the infant is eight days old? Would such a

question arise in any community where infant baptism was not common usage? And the discussion and answer of the question concede all that Fidus concedes in it. No one raises a doubt as to the authority and propriety of the rite. Were the ordinance at that time an innovation, or had it intruded itself into the Church within the memory of some of the aged bishops in that assembly, such a question could not have come in, and been discussed under so full an assumption and admission of its apostolical authority. Not only is its divine institution as fully conceded as that of adult baptism, but the association say, "we think it more especially to be observed in reference to infants, and persons newly born." — *Magis circa infantes ipsos, et recens natos observandum putamus.*

They thus give infant baptism precedence, as worthy of a more prompt and prominent attention than adult baptism. Nothing less than the unquestioned and apostolical authority, in their estimation, of this ordinance, and its general observance at that time in the Christian Church, could have led them to this high, not to say radical, ground, for the practice of the rite.

3. The connection, in the estimation of Fidus and the bishops, between baptism and circumcision. — Fidus argues that the rule of circumcision must be the rule of baptism as to time, and that the only proper day is the eighth, for administering the rite. Can it be an undesigned and untaught coincidence that he here presents? Why the connection of the two initiatory rites to the Church, and such a connection as makes the ancient rule the modern as to time? And why is baptism called "the spiritual circumcision"? We cannot escape the conviction that this connecting of the two rites, and this law of time, and this synonym for baptism, are the result of tradition and instruction, from the apostles; that the latter ordinance comes in the place of the former. If such were the teaching and belief of that early day, we can easily explain the introduction of these expressions. Otherwise the connection and some of the expressions are strangely accidental, and yet coincident.

4. The large section of the Church represented in this assembly. — The number of bishops in it was sixty-six. At that early date, A. D. 253, this number must have represented a very large portion of the African Church. For in the best days of Chris-

tianity in Africa there were not five hundred bishoprics on that continent. This body was, therefore, no small and unimportant gathering. It was no local clique of the clergy, drawn together on some principle of doctrinal affinity. Wide geographical boundaries marked the limits from which they came. It was a promiscuous gathering; nor did they know, till assembled, to what questions they were to make answer. A draft by lot on the Church at large would not probably have brought together fairer representatives of the Christian faith and practice concerning infant baptism than were found in the Carthaginian Association.

5. Their perfect agreement in answer to the question of Fidus. — There is a grateful unanimity among them for one who loves the sacrament in question. "As for what you thought fitting to be done, there was not one that was of your mind." *In hoc enim, quod tu putabas esse faciendum, nemo consensit.* This unity of opinion and result assures us that they reasoned from a unity of faith and of practice in the Church. Such agreement in faith and practice through the Church, and out of which their agreement in advice to Fidus sprung, may have resulted from either of two causes. There may have been a universal prevalence of the teaching of Christ and his apostles, that infant baptism is a divine institution in the Church. Or there may have been a universal prevalence of such a rite, and universal belief in it as divine, while it was only a forgery and an imposition among the original and authoritative rites of the Church.

In determining which of these two causes did, probably, lead them to this unity of advice to Fidus, we come to the last point we would make on this letter concerning infant baptism.

6. The time when this assembly was convened. — Some of its members could, very like, make their memories cover nearly half the period between the time of their session and the time of living apostles. They knew the generation that knew the apostles. In so narrow space of time could infant baptism have sprung up of human device, and established itself so widely and so absolutely? If this rite be an innovation and corruption among the institutions of the apostles, it must have come in by slow introduction. Three quarters of a century

would hardly suffice for so radical and fundamental a change in the constitution of the Church of God. Yet allow that to be sufficient time, for the sake of an inquiry. Between the time of this meeting at Carthage and the death of the apostle John, the interval was about one hundred and fifty years. Could the innovation and imposition have taken place in the last half of this interval? But that would have been within the lifetime and knowledge of these bishops. And knowing it, could they have gone through the discussion of the question of Fidus, and come to that unanimous result, with no intimation or breathed suspicion that the ordinance was of human invention, and so should be left to the widest range of private judgment for its performance? The entire teaching and spirit of the letter show that they supposed they were dealing with a divine ordinance, which could not be true if men had invented and introduced it within their memory and knowledge.

Could the innovation have taken place during the first half of this interval? But it is claimed by those who regard this ordinance as of man, that it is a great violation and departure from the primitive and apostolical constitution of the Church. It is a change, say they, of vast magnitude. Could it have been wrought in seventy-five years, no protesting and pure minority remaining, nor any record of the change, to prevent the unity of opinion and result in that body of sixty-six bishops? Could the change have been made in that age when a part of those among whom it was to be wrought were men whom the apostles had personally instructed?

On the theory that Infant Baptism is a human device and a forgery, thrust in among apostolic institutions, this Letter of Cyprian to Fidus is a great perplexity. The narrow and definite question that it answers, the number of bishops for whom it speaks, their perfect unanimity in opinion, and their nearness to the apostolic age, are confusing thoughts pressed on us by the Letter. If this ordinance be an invention and imposition, begun so early, carried so thoroughly and widely, and all knowledge and history of its corrupt human beginning lost so profoundly, and all within one hundred and fifty years of the apostolic age, then is it a marvel in Church history.

On the theory of invention and imposition this wonder is

increased when we read in Origen, who was born much before and within a century of the apostolic age, "infants are by the usage of the Church baptized," (Homl. in Lev. 8, c. 4,) and, "the Church had from the apostles a tradition to give baptism to infants," (Comm. in Ep. ad Rom. 5: 9). And Tertullian, an earlier witness, adds to the wonder when he adds his testimony to this Church usage in his day. For, speaking of the responsibility of sponsors, and advising the delay of infant baptism that their responsibility may not be so great, he says: "What need is there that the godfathers should be brought into danger? For they may fail of their promises by death, or they may be mistaken by the child's proving of wicked disposition. What need their guiltless age make such haste?" (De Baptismo, c. 18.)

But as we have to do only with the Letter of Cyprian, all earlier testimony to the primitive use of this sacrament is omitted.

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### ARTICLE III.

#### WHO WAS THEODORE PARKER?

1. *Theodore Parker's Experience as a Minister, with some Account of his Early Life and Education for the Ministry;—contained in a Letter from him to the Members of the Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society of Boston.* Boston: Rufus Leighton, Jr. 1860. pp. 182.
2. *Sundry Discourses, Addresses, Proceedings, &c. &c., occasioned by the Death of Rev. Theodore Parker, viz: Discourses by Rev. Messrs. J. F. Clarke, Bartol, Alger, Newhall, Frothingham, Hepworth;—Addresses by Messrs. C. M. Ellis, Wendell Phillips, R. W. Emerson, at the Music Hall, Boston, Sunday, June 17, 1860; and Proceedings at the New England Anti-Slavery Convention, Melodeon, May 31, 1860.*

THAT a man by the name of Theodore Parker, the reputed author of one of these publications, and concerning whom the



rest are written, once lived among us and is now dead, we are led to believe, partly in consequence of the principles of faith by which we receive the Bible as the Word of God, however much in some of its parts it may fail to coincide with our instincts, — which were Mr. Parker's ultimate test of truth.

If we were not, in the strongest sense of the word, believers, we could assign reasons for doubting, with Mr. Parker's principles adopted from Strauss, whether Mr. Parker be not a myth. We could prove that he never could have gained existence — neither as a miracle nor as a natural product. A miracle, according to Mr. Parker, is impossible in the nature of things. This is a corner-stone in his system. His doctrine is this: — "God never violates the else constant mode of operation of the universe;" so that "a theological miracle is as impossible as a round triangle." ("Experience," p. 36.) We need not say that this is mere dogmatizing and begging the question; the bare assertion of the opposite is equally valid. But a miracle being impossible, Mr. Parker, if he existed, was not of miraculous origin; — and now, did he exist by ordinary generation? On this point we need that very proof the alleged absence of which, in connection with the Bible, is the ground of Mr. Parker's unbelief.

The evidence for the miraculous conception of Christ, for example, Mr. Parker tells us is "good for nothing, because we have not the Affidavit of the Mother, the only competent human witness; nor even the Declaration of the Son." (p. 36.)

"The Affidavit of the Mother"! For want of this, the miraculous conception of Christ must be counted "good for nothing." Such is the logic of infidelity. Its tender mercies in the treatment of testimony are cruel. Suppose that the Mother of Jesus had personally appeared before Scribe Ben-Ezra, a Notary-Public in Judea, and had made "affidavit" of the miraculous conception. The idea of Mary's doing this is absurd; but if it were done, how could it help Mr. Parker? Would he believe a reputed or attested copy of the "affidavit"? Would he not demand a sight of the original? How could he be gratified? Positively, there would be no way now of verifying that affidavit; we must rely on the testimony of witnesses living at the time of the event, and we must treat their writings



as we treat those of Julius Caesar and Livy. Such witnesses we have in the New Testament, to say nothing of prophecy.

Has any one of us ever seen the "affidavit" of the mother of Mr. Parker touching his birth? Has such "affidavit" ever been made? Relatives and neighbors may have enjoyed the help which this document would have afforded to their faith, but that does not help us, nor the coming generations, to whom the birth of Mr. Parker will be of such immeasurable importance, if his principles are to prevail among men. But the testimony of relatives and neighbors on this point would be, at the very best, as loose as that of Prophets and Evangelists; we should, therefore, be obliged to consult our "instincts" as to the probability that such a man as he describes himself to be did really exist. Moreover, Mr. Parker himself nowhere tells us, except in a cursory way, that he was born! Where have we the solemn "Declaration of the Son" of Mrs. Parker that he was born? He begins the narrative of his life with these words: "In my boyhood," &c. Now this is vague. Great consequences may ensue. Suppose that, hereafter, some of his followers should insist that such as he could not have descended from earthly parents by ordinary generation;—the means of contradicting this are as weak and insufficient as he alleges the testimony of the Evangelists to be respecting the miraculous conception and birth of Him whom he denominates "the fair-haired youth of Galilee."

Is it possible that Mr. Parker, by omitting to tell us whether he was born like other members of the human family, intended to leave room, in future years, for a claim that he was of preternatural origin? By all testimony concerning him, and judging from his autobiography, larger self-conceit never dwelt in one of human kind. As he lay on his death-bed, we are told by his personal friends that he looked on his bust and said: "That head should have accomplished more!" "The great, obvious Social Forces in America," he says, (pp. 92, 93,) "may be thus summed up: 1. There is the organized Trading Power; 2. The organized Political Power; 3. The organized Ecclesiastical Power; 4. The organized Literary Power." After briefly characterizing them severally, in contemptuous terms, he continues, "I must" [he uses the word *must* in a preterite sense,

meaning, *it behooved me to*] "examine these four great Social Powers and show what was good in them and what ill. — When I came to a distinct consciousness of my own first principle, and my consequent relation to what was about me, spite of the good they contained, I found myself greatly at variance with all the four. They had one principle, and I another." These lines read like letters from some whose diseased imaginations run in the direction of magistracy, or primacy, or royalty. His friends, however, believe him to have been always sane.

We shall not be astonished at any further claim which his eulogists and followers may put forth when the lapse of years has veiled his early history. Would that he had settled the question whether he was actually born! With the history of Mohammedanism before us, to say nothing of shoals of antichrists, we tremble to think what histories of controversy may ensue upon this accidental or intentional omission. But after all, the reading of his autobiography has made us question whether even an explicit statement by himself as to his birth would be decisive, and whether, in fact, any kind of testimony is decisive on any subject whatever; and so we are led to question whether Mr. Parker himself be not a myth.

The Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society at the Music Hall might, with kindness and Christian meekness, now endeavor to help our faith, mingling with their asseverations a little surprise at our incredulity. They might begin their reply to us thus: "That which was from the beginning of our enterprise as a Congregational Society, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of Mr. Parker, declare we unto you."

But, gentle friends, while we thank you for your patience with our incredulity, consider what a fable Mr. Parker has labored to prove the miraculous conception of Christ to be, even though asserted by that apostle John whose supposed words you here so aptly borrow. You know, — for Mr. Parker spent his life in assuring you, — and when he was "up to" his "shoulders in the grave," to use his language concerning himself, he reiterates it, — and, wasting away at Santa Cruz, he admonishes you with his letters, that the Bible is not to be

received according to its professions, and the general interpretation of the evangelical sects, that is, of the Christian world. The Twenty-Eighth Congregational Society, therefore, is not to be believed implicitly, when they testify concerning Mr. Parker, if our "instincts" are averse to the belief that such a man as he existed, any more than the Old Testament and the Evangelists are to be implicitly believed by Mr. Parker and his friends when their narratives are repugnant to Mr. Parker's "instincts" and those of his friends.

Applying Mr. Parker's alleged infallible test of truth to his remarkable book, "*Experience as a Minister*," we can prove that he never wrote it, and for the reason that he never could have believed, felt, and said the things there detailed.

According to Mr. Parker, whatever God, and Christ, and the Sacred Writers say, is not necessarily true because they say it, unless it coincides with our human instincts. That which goes counter to Mr. Parker's instincts, he maintains cannot be true. Let us hear him :

"I took no principle for true simply because it was in the Bible; what therein seemed false or wrong I rejected as freely as if I had found it in the Sacred Books of the Buddhists or Mormons." (p. 60.)

"I found certain great primal Intuitions of Human Nature which depend on no logical process of demonstration, but are rather facts of consciousness given by the instinctive action of human nature itself." "Here, then, was the foundation of religion, laid in Human Nature itself." "Then I proceeded to develop the contents of these instinctive intuitions." "First, from the History of mankind — savage, barbarous, civilized, enlightened;" — "the Sacred Books of various nations, poets, philosophers — such as deal with sleep-walking, dreams, visions, prophecies, second-sight, oracles, ecstasies, witchcraft, magic, wonders, the appearance of devils, ghosts, and the like." "In the beginning I resolved to preach the natural laws of man as they are writ in his constitution, no less and no more." (pp. 42-45.)

"At the Cambridge Divinity School, Prof. Henry Ware, Jr., told the young men, if there appeared to them any contradiction between the Reason of Man and the Letter of the Bible, they 'must follow the written word'; — 'for you can never be so certain of the correctness of what takes place in your own mind, as of what is written in the Bible.' In an ordination sermon, he told the young minister 'not

to preach himself but Christ, and not to appeal to Human Nature for proofs of doctrines, but to the Authority of Revelation.'” (p. 55.)

This pure and beautiful truth from this remarkable man, Mr. Parker mentions only to repudiate. He makes human nature in particular, and nature in general, the divinely inspired oracles. He has a low opinion of Deity as described in all sacred books, including the Old Testament, and parts of the New. He classes the God of the Old Testament with heathen deities. He says, “Zeus is licentious, Hermes will steal, and Jehovah is narrow.” Yes, such words have been professedly written by man!

On his principles, then, we may aver that Mr. Parker never believed, felt, or said the things which his friends have published for him as from his pen. The reason is, it offends the instincts of the whole Christian world, when we are required to believe that a creature of God ever used language in speaking of his Maker, and his professed Messiah, and of his Revelation, so brusque and flippant. The blood curdles, the heart is ready to suspend its action, as the Christian world reads some of his writings, especially the little book published as his “Experience.” If some things in the Bible are, according to Mr. Parker’s system, impossible, for the reason that they offend the moral sense, we, the world of Christian believers, also having a moral sense, deny that Mr. Parker, or any other creature of God, could utter the audacious things which some have given to the world as his “Experience,” written by himself.

The alternative is, if Mr. Parker is right, the whole Christian world, with the exception of Mr. Parker and his friends, have no moral sense, no instincts, no reason, no human nature. Should we give ourselves up implicitly to the instructions of this book, we must come to this conclusion. But Mr. Parker’s principles are in the way of believing, on testimony, anything whatever; any man’s instincts are to him Revelation; that which one strenuously desires is, for that reason, true. There is, therefore, strictly speaking, no such thing as unbelief; and there are no unbelievers, except it be men who either have no “instincts,” or who have perverted them, which, one might think, is the case with all men who reject the principles of this Mr. Parker. That a fellow-creature should have been capa-

ble of such enormous folly is to us as incredible as the miracles of the Old Testament, the destruction of the Canaanites, and the pretensions of "the first three Evangelists" are to Mr. Parker. We should be justified, therefore, in treating him and his professed "Experience" as he has treated the sacred oracles.

But we are not sceptics. We are satisfied with the ordinary laws of evidence, whether we examine the Sacred Writers, or a newspaper, or Mr. Parker's writings. We have no special rules for weighing evidence and testing human language, in particular cases; and as we believe the Bible with its histories, so we believe that these interesting, and to us sad, historical accounts respecting Mr. Parker, which our fellow-citizens at the Music Hall have put forth, are substantial verities.

He has given us his autobiography in about one hundred and fifty pages, duodecimo, leaving the world in no doubt as to his opinions on religious subjects, and his reasons for them.

He declined the profession of law, because, he says, "I thought the lawyers' moral tone was lower than the ministers', and I dared not put myself under that temptation [which] I prayed God not to lead me into." So he chose the study of Theology.

But his theological opinions were, some of them, formed and fixed in childhood. Near the commencement of his narrative we find this important statement:

"In my early childhood, after a severe but silent struggle, I made way with the ghastly doctrine of Eternal Damnation and a Wrathful God; this is the Goliath of that Theology. From my seventh year I have had no *Fear* of God, only an ever-greatning LOVE and TRUST." (p. 35.)

In this experience, so briefly yet fully told, great consequences were necessarily involved. We regard this passage in the mental history of young Parker as of the utmost importance, and we shall therefore dwell upon it.

He tells us that in making "way with the ghastly doctrine of Eternal Damnation and a Wrathful God," he had a "struggle"; that it was "severe but silent." These are solemn and affecting words, importing a great deal, as any one will judge

who has considered the laws of Mr. Parker's mind as evinced in his remarkable use of language.

Why should there have been any struggle in his mind? What law was there in his nature which kept him from eschewing the very thought of "the ghastly doctrine" as quickly as his stomach would reject ipecacuanha? The doctrine being, we are told, "a horrible blasphemy," "a libel on God," and "contrary to all the analogies of the parental relation," there can be nothing, one would think, in human nature, — certainly not in a nature "born and bred under Unitarian influences," (p. 35,) — which would make resistance enough in the mind to constitute a struggle in rejecting the unnatural falsehood. Be it remembered, young Parker was not of Orthodox descent and education. No Westminster Catechism, with its "What is the misery of that estate whereinto man fell?" and its fearful answer, was ever permitted to chill young Theodore's early and instinctive love to the God of the more liberal theology; and that mother's knee at which he stood, we doubt not, on Sabbath evenings, to say his hymns, had never bowed with his to a Being "one third of whom," as he wickedly describes it, "died to make atonement to the other two thirds." Nor did he learn to believe "that Balaam's she-ass spoke certain Hebrew words, and one undivided third part of God was 'born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, descended into Hell, and the third day rose again, to take away the wrath which the other two undivided third parts of God felt against all mankind!'" (p. 89.) He was never instructed according to that "Orthodox conception of the Deity," that there is "a fourth person to the Godhead, namely, the Devil, an outlying member, — as much a part of Deity as either Son or Holy Ghost, and far more powerful than all the rest, who seem but jackals to provide for this 'roaring lion,' which devours what the others but create, die for, inspire, and fill." (p. 70.) Favored child! whose infancy was lulled by no cradle-song pitched on that key; but the sweet influences of pure truth dwelt over you and followed you, set apart as you were, in Lexington, from Massachusetts children in general, as though Heaven would show, by such experiment, that the human heart, conscience, will, instinct, — all, are the protoplast of liberal views, the

model to which truth, when it grows freely, will shape itself. "I count it a great good fortune," he tells us (p. 107), "that I was bred among religious Unitarians, and thereby escaped so much superstition."

Whence, then, came this "struggle" in the young Theodore's mind against "the ghastly doctrine of Eternal Damnation and a Wrathful God"? (p. 79.)

It came from that law of his moral nature which God has implanted in us, adapting it and the divine Revelation in the Scriptures, the one to the other. Young Parker had found the doctrine of eternal retribution in the Scriptures before he was seven years of age. Inspired words, conned in his little Bible, had waked up dread thoughts in his child-nature. He had read, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. — And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." He was an exception to all children if his fancy had not caught hold of that verse, ". . . and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." The early convictions of his mind as to the testimony of the Bible on this subject were all confirmed in after-life. He tells us (pp. 63, 65):

"If I wished to teach the nobleness of man, the Old Testament and New were there, with dreadful condemnations of Human Nature; did I speak of God's Love for all men — the Bible was full of ghastly things, — Chosen People, Hell, Devil, Damnation, — to prove that he loved only a few, and them not overmuch." . . . "The Protestant appeals to the supernatural Bible, to prove that Jesus was born with no human father, the total depravity of all men, the wrath of God, the existence of a Devil, and the eternal torments of Hell."

The second chapter of the Epistle to the Romans explains how his mind wrought under the impressions made by the testimony of the Bible on this theme. He showed the work of the law written in his heart, his conscience also bearing witness, his thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another. Where the Bible is added to this natural law in the hearts of all men, sensitiveness is imparted to it, as in photography to the surface which is to be imprinted. So that this youth



needed only the Bible to kindle in his carnal mind, which, like the carnal mind of every one of us, was enmity against God, a conflict, the issue of which could not fail to be momentous. According as it turned, there would afterwards be, either a bias toward submission before those plain declarations of the Bible which, Paul says, "slew me," or, a rising up of a resentful feeling. Perhaps no child who reads the Bible passes its seventh year without experiencing this struggle. It is often aggravated by listening to evangelical preaching, and by the warnings administered in kindness both by judicious and by indiscreet friends.

But Mr. Parker tells us a secret which is deeply interesting. He uses a word which reveals a history whose consequences may never be measured. He says that in his early childhood he "made way" with the doctrine in question "*after a severe but silent struggle.*" That word, "*silent struggle,*" tells a tale, an honest tale, which will awaken remembrances and deep sympathy in many a breast. It confirms, we may observe, our former statements with regard to the single-handed work which God's Word, reinforced by no Calvinistic instructions at home, was employed to do in his heart. There was no outward combatant, plying him with proof-texts, rousing his natural aversion to God, warning him and making him desperate. No; all was "silent," — "severe but silent" was that "struggle" in which he "made way" with eternal judgment. In saying this, he virtually acquits God and man of severe treatment; he lays the responsibility of his great decision at the door of no injudicious pastor, parent, teacher; the "struggle" was as "silent" as the fall of the pollen on unfruitful stamens in flowers which he trod upon in childhood. A "struggle" at the fountain-head of life, though "silent," is a "severe" strife, for a great law of nature is one of the competitors.

The feelings with which Mr. Parker ever regarded that "struggle," both at the time, and also when he wrote his autobiography, afford us the opportunity to say something which may disabuse some honest, inquiring mind of a fatal prejudice. For nothing can be more erroneous than the idea, which Mr. Parker always had, that, whatever it was which was seeking to enforce on him the doctrine of eternal retribution and of a



punishing God, was inimical to him," — "airs from hell," the sphinx, priestcraft, superstition, Edgar Poe's "Raven," a sooty hand, a death-watch. All who sympathize with Mr. Parker's views with regard to future retribution, have the same impression respecting the doctrine and those who believe and teach it. Mr. Parker himself thus describes his impression and theirs concerning us and our faith: "The imperfect and cruel character attributed to God, rejoicing in his hell and its legions of devils, is the fundamental vice of the ecclesiastical theology which so many accept as their 'Religion,' and name the hideous thing 'Christianity!'" (p. 79.)

To show the great mistake and the injustice of this, we will imagine a judicious, evangelical mother conversing with some Theodore, before his "seventh year," on this dread theme; one, we venture to say, which few evangelical parents have occasion to be forward in bringing to the mind of a child who has read or listened to the Bible. We believe that there is an innate fear of darkness in a child who never heard nursery-stories of ghosts; that Night has her inborn oracle within us. So we believe that God has created every subject of his moral government with an apprehensiveness which readily takes and firmly holds the conviction, that wrath has gone out against us, and that we are not by nature on good terms with God. Only let a child have read or listened to the Bible, even without comment, and this is sure.

For the sake of unity, we will suppose young Parker to have had such an evangelical mother. As we write for Christian parents, among others, the following simple illustrations will not be despised by scholars and theologians who are brought into contact with a child's mind on these great themes.

Theodore, then, is thoughtful and tearful, as Sabbath evening shuts in. "What is the matter, my son," says the mother. After the usual hesitancy, and sobs, and the reiterated kind inquiry, he says that he feels that he is wicked, and that God is angry with him, and that he cannot go to heaven. "Why do you think so?" Because the Bible says 'God is angry with the wicked every day,' and, 'The wicked shall be turned into hell,' and he knows that he has wicked thoughts and does wicked things. "Has any one ever told you so?" No; but

he thinks and feels thus whenever he goes to pray. Something tells him that he must be different before he dies, to be happy in being with God.

Now the judicious mother will proceed to confirm in Theodore's mind all that the Bible reveals, and his moral "instinct," which has been touched by it, confirms; (and "our Theodore" had such an "instinct," so touched, long before he joined the Divinity School, — a safer "instinct" at his seventh year than when it had been tampered with;) she will proceed to tell the child of our mysterious connection with our first parents, and how true it is that we are born with a sinful nature which must be renewed by the Holy Spirit; that the Holy Spirit, in pursuance of God's infinite love in Redemption, does this for all who are led to ask for it; she repeats it, that this is in consequence of the infinite love and compassion of God toward us, who has provided a Saviour, and who by God's appointment, and by his own voluntary choice, suffered and died, and that all who trust in him as their atoning Saviour, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. "Be not cast down then," she says, "my son, because you perceive that you are a sinner; true, you are, and the Bible tells you that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven. God is now trying you to see whether you, as a sinner, will accept pardon and salvation by Jesus Christ, and seek to follow Christ. Adam and Eve were tried to see whether they would keep God's commandments perfectly; you are tried to see whether you will accept Jesus Christ to be in the stead of your having been perfectly good, which, while it is still your duty, you never can be, in this world. Christ answers for us to the law of God which requires perfection. 'The soul that sinneth shall die.' Christ has died in our stead. Obey the Gospel, put your trust, as a sinner, in Jesus Christ; ever strive to be like him, and God says that you 'shall not perish, but have everlasting life.'" Notwithstanding these words of love and hope, young Theodore will suggest how awful those words are in the Bible about hell, and everlasting fire, the devil and his angels. Perchance he will open to these words and ask for an explanation: "But I say unto you, my friends, be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more

that they can do ; but I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear ; fear him who after that he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear him."

The mother does not tell the boy that this is merely a warning to bad children against the "Tything-men," or the Jack Cades, who, after they have killed us, have power to cast our dead bodies into "a place where scavengers make bonfires ;" "a place which was outside of Jerusalem ;" nor does she admonish him that these words are only "the lustrous turban of an Eastern imagination ;" she tells him that all who refuse pardon, and all who sin against the strivings of God to save them, will, at death, be "cast into hell," and that "the wrath of God abideth on" them.

Theodore replies that this makes him afraid of God. She tells him it is intended to make men fear him in a proper way. "The Bible says, 'Fear him that hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear him.' We must think of God just as the Bible reveals him, just as God describes himself to us. But while you must always retain this belief about God, remember also that he is perfectly good ; that he loves those who love him, and those that seek him early shall find him. The judge is as good when he sends a wicked man to the gallows, as when he gives his children good things." — "But you, mother, and father, would never send me to prison forever ; is not God more kind even than you?" She says, "If you should do anything worthy of being punished by going to prison for the rest of your life, and your father were the only judge, and had to do it, he would let the law be fulfilled, though it would break his heart." — "Does it break God's heart?" the child inquires. "God says to wicked men, 'How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? my heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.' You remember how Jesus wept over Jerusalem, and how he said, 'How often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.' We read, 'As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, but that the wicked turn and live.'" She reminds him how he read to her, last winter, about the destruction of Jerusalem, and the torments which befell

the Jews. "Why did not Jesus save them from eating their own children in the famine, and from being tortured?" the child says. "Because He would have saved them once, and they would not," says the mother. "Are you so afraid of me and of your father, because we punish the children, that you cannot love us?" Theodore says, "I know that if I am good, it makes you happy; that it pains you to punish, as much as it does me to be punished." But still, his father and mother, he reminds her, would never send him away from them forever and ever; and how is this? "While you are with us, in this part of your life," she says, "we correct you for your improvement; but when you grow up, if you do terribly wicked things, there are punishments which are not in mercy, but for wrath. So with God; his dealings with men till death are to save them. Then if they have refused him, they perish. The young man whose wife sat on his knee and ate a part of his apple which he had secretly covered with poison, to kill her, was not punished out of mercy to him, but because he deserved it. Now we must leave it for God to judge, and to say, what sin against him deserves. If we doubt or dispute his justice and goodness when he threatens and punishes, we deny that he is worthy to be our God. But now, my son, think of Jesus in the manger, and see his acts of love and mercy, and on the cross; in heaven, he is interceding for you; and tell me, if God seems to you only like an executioner, or this world and the next nothing but a jail." — "But oh," says Theodore, "how many there are who live and die in sin, and the Bible tells us that they must be shut out of heaven forever." The child does not see how God can let them suffer forever and ever. "I do not see, my son," says she, "how God can let one generation of men after another be born into this world to be sick and to be wicked, to fight, and to kill; nor why he does not stop all this wickedness at once. You and I think that we should do so, if we had the power of God. You and I would have children born with nothing in their nature making it certain that every one of them will sin. You see that we cannot understand God's ways; they are not as our ways; 'neither are my thoughts your thoughts, saith the Lord.' We can hardly go out of the house, nor even stay within doors, without seeing

or reading many things which we think we should manage differently if we were God." — "But," he reminds her, "God knows everything beforehand. He knew how many would continue to be wicked, and he saw that they would have to be punished forever. Now I should think that God would not have made the world, if he saw that so many would be wicked and perish forever." He is getting close up to the limitations of thought, and she says, "Suppose that you and I leave all this for God to judge of and to decide; because, you know, if he had asked us whether he should make this world, with all its sins and miseries ever since Cain slew Abel, we should have said no, or have prayed him to decide for himself, and not to trust our judgment. You love to read in the book of Job, you know, about the war-horse and the eagle, the hawk, the ostrich, the peacock, the leviathan, and the other wonderful things of God. Do you know why God mentions all those plain and easy things to Job? He and his friends had been talking about the justice and goodness of God in governing the world; they were sadly puzzled, all of them; good Job was exceedingly tried as to his faith in God; and at last God appears and talks with him. But instead of explaining things to him, he gives him new lessons to learn, as hard as these. Do you know what they were? These were some of them: Light; the sea; the morning; death; rain, snow, frost, hail; the horse, the eagle, the wild goat, the unicorn. These were as hard lessons as sin, and punishment; the affliction of the good, and the prosperity of the wicked. When God had so humbled Job by showing him that he did not understand even the rain and dew, Job felt that he had better leave hard questions to God. Instead of saying that he would not love God till he could reconcile everything with his sense of what was right, he abhorred himself, and repented in dust and ashes."

The result of all this instruction, so radically different from that to which young Parker was subjected, and which his books instruct people to abhor, will now depend, by the grace of God, on the question whether that young free agent chooses to yield his "instincts" to be corrected by the perfect word of God which giveth understanding to the simple. Some of his "instincts" were as really damaged by the fall of our first parents,

as other parts of his nature. Will he persist in listening implicitly to them? or will he rather give heed to one among them which is the vital energy in that mysterious precinct of the soul where accountability has its origin and seat, and which God left behind him, to help regain possession, when God had been disowned and his government was broken down? It was this which made "severe but silent struggle," as we read, in the youthful heart of Theodore Parker; and in this case we know the issue.

To represent evangelical Christendom, as Mr. Parker and his friends do, as believing in a Being who "devours his offspring," "and rejoices in his legions of devils," for whom He "gathers prey" "like jackals," "creates men to torment them in an endless hell paved with the skulls of infants not a span long," (p. 142,) is so false, so inexcusable in one who has grown to man's estate, it is so fearfully reckless to use such language, it implies such infinite self-conceit to represent all the world of believers in this light, and it is so excruciating to the sensibilities of all who are not "past feeling," that if some utter their agonized thoughts in the public assembly, in prayer to God that He would arrest such utterances, it is to be explained precisely in the way in which one of Mr. Parker's friends, in one of these Sermons before us, excuses Mr. Parker's terrible imprecations against those whom he calls evil-doers. "In moments of agony," he tells us, "we do not reason; we shriek." Is liberty to shriek the prerogative of Mr. Parker?

We are no advocates for the practice of arraigning any evil-doer in prayer, before God; allusions in devotional exercises to individuals in the way of preferring charges or complaints against them, need the utmost grace to keep them from being the utterances of unsanctified feeling; and the more that we truly mourn over the sins of our fellow-men as committed, not against us, but against God, the more subdued and cautious will our expressions be in prayer. While we sincerely feel this, and because we feel it, we are impressed with Mr. Parker's exceeding want of good taste, which alone would have kept him from making loud complaint against being the subject of prayer in whatever terms. He tells his people, writing to them from Santa Cruz, (p. 153,)

"Yet, let it not surprise you that in some quarters this theologic odium continues still, and shows itself in 'revival meetings' by public prayers that God would go to my study, and confound me there so that I could not write my sermon; or meet me in your pulpit, and put a hook in my jaws so that I could not speak; or remove me out of the world. Such petitions finding abundant Biblical example, [the sneer at the Bible being ever ready to his lips] are not surprising when they come from such places, on such occasions, and from men whose mind and conscience are darkened by the dreadful theology that still haunts many such places."

The true explanation of all this we think, is, he had not a good conscience. For it will be remembered by every one who has read this "Experience" of his, that he deemed himself commissioned to do a great work in restoring to the world the lost idea of God, and that too by denunciation, by sarcasm, by satire, by scorn, by all the terrible enginery of wrath. Everywhere in this book the reader is made to feel that the idea of a new Messiah was projecting through this man's consciousness upon his followers.

But in parts of his book he indulges in lugubrious complaints of the manner in which he and his principles had been received and treated; how the Faculty of the Cambridge Divinity School placed their veto on the choice of him by the Senior Class to address them;—and much of this sort, at which he manifests a degree of pain and such mental contortion, that we instinctively turn away the face, yet wondering that a man conscious of such a mission as his should be moved by such things. "'Tis true, this god did shake." But if there be anything in all the book which excites in us a feeling akin to love toward him, they are these mental sufferings at the treatment which he says that he received from his brethren for his opinions. Even the kings in Hades were moved with pity when the king of Babylon died. "Art thou also become weak as we? Art thou become like unto us?" But the discovery of these feelings on his part destroys our confidence in his superiority. Supposing him even to be at heart a very bad man, he was not great; for then he would not have betrayed such feelings at his rejection by men. He would have fulfilled that description in Croly's "Satan":

"On thy curl'd lip is thron'd disdain,  
That may revenge, but not complain."



Could he really have believed that he was all which he professed to be as a reformer, — one appointed of God to do a great work in the earth? He would then have had tears for the unbelief of men, but he would not have let us hear his cries at their severe treatment of himself. There is no such thing in the New Testament writers. A man who could use tomahawk and scalping-knife with such a war-dance and yell of savage rhetoric over the mistakes of men, and upon their reputations, should not have betrayed such sensitiveness at his treatment by the Cambridge Professors. Thus he speaks of it: (p. 154.)

“ . . . and that, too, at a time when I was just recovering from severe illness, and fluttering 'twixt life and death — the scrutinizing physician telling me the chances were equally divided between the two; I could only stand in the pulpit to preach by holding on to the desk with one hand while I lifted the other up. Others might have expected such treatment from these men; I confess, my friends, that I did not.”

And again:

“ . . . let mine enemies rejoice as much as they will — let them thank God for the premature decrepitude of my voice, the silence of my study, where worms perchance devour my books more dear even than costly, let them find ‘answer to our prayers’ in the sorrow of my personal friends — in the keen distress of my intimates, — I complain nothing thereat.”

And yet no complaint could be more pathetic and touching; and, we repeat it, nothing in him awakens in us such tenderness toward him, — but then it spoils all his claims as the forerunner of a new and glorious day, a chief benefactor to the human mind and heart, a deliverer of all Christendom from its present bondage to error. When did “the fair-haired young Jew of Nazareth,” or even his deluded apostles, ever complain after this manner? Not once. As to those prayers which were offered against him, it looks as though he were truly afraid of them; but, with his self-assurance of being the harbinger of the world’s redemption, in communion with “the great Father and Mother of us all,” bearing messages of salvation to the victims of error, what though the poor deluded creatures whom he came to save did, in their absurd way, utter prayers and even imprecations? Do not the sick and the insane often treat their benefactors with

equal ingratitude? We were all, to his mind, part of us sick, and the rest mad. There were devout Jews at Thessalonica who doubtless felt that Paul was profane; but if they prayed for him, or even against him, he showed, in his treatment of them and of their prayers, a different tone of feeling from that of him who was sent, in our day, to separate the "Transient" from the "Permanent in Christianity."

Mr. Parker's history, his life and death, are intensely interesting as connected with the history of Unitarianism and its relation to divine truth and human salvation. We all know its great professions, and the early, sanguine hopes of its friends; we know with what learning and culture it was brought forward as the last and perfect type of pure Christianity, — the doctrine of One Person, only, in the Godhead, and all the attributes of God comprehended in the analogy of the paternal relation. Able men were among its defenders and advocates, both laymen and ministers; the University was under its full control; great inherited names and affluence, and social position, and possession of all the old churches save one, in the metropolis of New England, gave it all the advantage which heart could conceive or wish.

Dr. Channing is gathered to his fathers; Rev. Henry Ware, Jr. — a beautiful specimen of mind and heart — has gone, with Buckminster and Greenwood, to the grave; but their characters and attainments were an endowment sufficient to enrich a denomination and make it respected for half a century, if that denomination could live so long, even if no one name should, during that time, appear as a central, controlling influence in that communion.

But now there appears among them one who surpasses all the old English infidels, and their French imitators, in their assaults upon the Bible, and in their contemptuous treatment of all that men generally hold sacred in a divine revelation. He says, (pp. 61–63,)

"With Protestant ministers, the Bible is a Fetish. — For ultimate authority, the minister does not appeal to God, manifesting himself in the world of matter and the world of man, but only to the Bible; to that he prostitutes his mind and conscience, heart and soul; on the

authority of an anonymous Hebrew Book he will justify the slaughter of innocent men, women, and children, by the thousand; and on that of an anonymous Greek Book, he will believe, or at least command others to believe, that man is born totally depraved, and God will perpetually slaughter men in hell by the million, though they had committed no fault except that of not believing an absurd doctrine they had never heard of. — The Bible is not only Master of the Soul; it is also a talisman to keep men from harm; bodily contact with it through hand or eye, is a part of Religion; — so it lies in railroad stations, in the parlors and sleeping-chambers of taverns, and the cabins of ships, only to be seen and touched, not read. The pious mother puts it in the trunk of her prodigal son, about to travel, and while she knows he is wasting her substance upon harlots and in riotous living, she contents herself with the thought that ‘he has got this Bible with him and promised to read a chapter every day!’

“I had not been long a minister before I found this worship of the Bible, as a Fetish, hindering me at every step.”

So he sets himself to tear out the Bible, and all the associations which interweave it with the soul, from the popular mind. In doing this, his power of sarcasm is absolutely Satanic. Our readers, many of them, are not prepared to learn certain things which have been said by this man; they bear the same proportion to the old infidelity which steam bears to hand labor and the old machinery. We must be near the end of all things, one would think; for under no vial in the Apocalypse can we conceive that there will be more ingenious, and more diabolical, assaults on things sacred. Of all the expressions which human malignity and ingenuity ever invented to ridicule a hated idea or thing, nothing came up to the language of Mr. Parker in ridiculing the Old Testament. Things most beautiful and touching, associated with all that is reverend and sweet in our conceptions of those days, — so George Herbert communes with God, —

“ ——— when Thou didst lodge with Lot,  
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,  
Advise with Abraham, when thy power could not  
Encounter Moses’ strong complaint and moan,” —

are by this Mr. Parker fouled and besmeared. He commits nuisances in the Holy of holies. He chalks bad words and shocking images on the boards of the Tabernacle. The *sans*

*eulottes* of Paris, when Louis Philippe had fled, broke into the palace, and some of them, we are told, rushing into the bedchamber, and seeing the magnificent bed, jumped upon it, and one man, with blouse and boots, turned a somerset upon it. No less pleasure, (nor was it very unlike,) did Mr. Parker seem to experience when he had broken into some hallowed region of Christian thought over which the Old Testament hung like a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. We hear him snicker where the good of all sects daily weep and pray. It admits of a question whether it is expedient to repeat some illustrations of this; but perhaps one or two may be usefully employed to show the nature of this man, it being understood that his books abound in just such things, and that these books are "Fetishes" with thousands of young men and young women, some of whom are exercised with doubts and tempted with unbelief. Let them see whither unbelief of the Bible will drift them.

For example: Jacob has his vision of the Ladder in the field at Bethel;—the broad affluent stairway reaching with easy slope from earth to heaven, angels passing and repassing in converse with each other, Almighty God standing above it, and holding converse with the sleeping future progenitor of the great Hebrew people, of whom, concerning the flesh, the Son of God would come. The vision passes, the great object, in its effect on his mind, and on the minds of all future generations, both Jew and Gentile, is effected, whether it be to encourage public or private confidence in God as conversant with human affairs, and condescending to every son and daughter of man. Jacob awakes out of his sleep;—"surely God is in this place and I knew it not." He begins to pray, he would build an altar, according to the dictates of the early piety; but, alone and helpless, he merely sets up the stone which was his pillow, and with the oil which he took to use with his food, he makes the customary sign of consecration. Now he vows to his God that if he will be with him, and bring him to his father's house in peace, "then shall the Lord be my God, and of all which thou givest me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee." True, all this belongs to God, and of His own he will give Him, when he sacrifices; but in what way

can he better express his love than by yielding up choice treasures as an offering, not for their intrinsic value, but to signify his sense of obligation and gratitude?

Mr. Parker takes this consecrated story, and flaunts his mirth and sarcasm in the face of it. How does he represent Jacob's vow? In what light does it appear to this great pioneer of Christendom, ahead of it on the way to millennial glory? All that Mr. Parker can say is, that Jacob was a mean, cunning man, and in his vow of the tenth, as a return for God's implored blessing, we find him 'driving a sharp trade with Elohim.'

By that turn of the sacred into the secular, by that alteration of the angle of vision, making a heavenly object ludicrous, by the use of those sarcastic hits in which he is all powerful, he gibbets one passage and another of Holy Writ before the eyes of his admirers, who, finding some of their "instincts" met and gratified by his wit, and feeling toward him somewhat as men do toward Blondin, as they see a professed minister walking on stilts upon a rope in defiance of that which has been the fear and dread of all men, almost worship him as a brave bold man, who must, of course, be great and good, and not diabolical, because he is withal very charitable and a great friend of man. And so the consciences and the tastes of thousands are debauched, and God is to them no longer the God of the Bible, but an infinite "Father and Mother," who it were infinitely absurd to suppose had honored "the lids" of any "one book" as the enclosures of his mind and will.

Now God has purposed to destroy the cities of the plain. And Abraham "sat in the tent-door in the heat of the day." Three strangers appear to him; he brings them into his tent. "And Abraham ran unto the herd and fetched a calf, tender and good, and gave it unto a young man; and he hasted to dress it." When the repast is ended, the event which became a hinge to the history of man, the conception and birth of Isaac, is predicted; and "through faith," we are told in the eleventh of Hebrews, it came to pass. Some one is speaking to Abraham, who, the overwhelming majority of readers and commentators in all ages have felt, is more than human, more than angelic. "And the Lord went his way as soon as he had left

communing with Abraham; and Abraham returned unto his place."

The infinite condescension of God, who, in those days, if we believe anything, we must believe had communications with man, such as are here described, led Him, it would seem, to use the human form for the great purposes here narrated. The object being to excite and to reward faith in Abraham and his posterity, as we are warranted to suppose, the rites of hospitality are shared by this mysterious being and his companions. So we read, and so we believe, not presuming to explain the mystery of the divine manifestation, but nothing doubting that God was there.

Mr. Parker knows what the common belief is with regard to that passage. He must disenchant men of all thought or feeling that there is anything supernatural in the narrative; in the atmosphere of his mind, so sublimated (he and his friends call it spiritualized) that it consists only of azote, in which nothing supernatural can draw a breath, this narrative is decomposed. And how is it re-presented? in what way does he speak of the scene at Mamre?

It is this: "God is dining on veal with Abraham." We suppress italics, and withhold exclamation points. Have we not trespassed beyond forgiveness in the mind of every reader in recording these words? An intelligent gentleman, for several years a hearer at the Music-Hall, who at last fled back from the borders of the pit to the faith of Christendom, has told us of the shudder which went through even that Hall when those words were spoken, in a sermon, on the Lord's day.

His familiar talk about "the fair-haired youth of Nazareth," so well known to every cursory reader of his writings, shall not be quoted here, nor will we pain the reader with but one more extract, and that in another connection. The author of such utterances at last draws near the eternal world. But he spends a part of his waning strength in writing a book,—his "Experience as a Minister," which is a highly wrought decanter full of deadly poison, a decoction of all the bitter things in his previous writings against the Bible, implacable in hatred of the Orthodox, and full of contempt and scorn (see p. 108) of Unitarians, excepting Rev. J. F. Clarke, and four

or five others whom, he says, (p. 152,) "I have not named, lest I should scare their timid reputation from its nest and addle their hopes of future usefulness." He dies and is buried. His particular friend and chief eulogist, the present Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, tells us, in his "Look at the Life of Theodore Parker," (p. 18,) — "He has gone to sleep under the blue Tuscan sky. His dust mingles with that of the men of many ages, — with the Oscans and Latins, with the Tarquins and old Etruscan chiefs, with Roman consuls and Roman orators, with Carthaginian invaders from Africa, with Keltic invaders from Gaul, with Cimbri and Greek, with Ostrogoth and Lombard, with mediæval monks and doctors, with the dust of St. Francis, Dante, Michael Angelo, Petrarch, and Tasso. And if he may not rest in Santa Croce, with the illustrious dead of Florence, neither is Dante there, nor Savonarola." As a further apology and consolation it might have been added, that not even the hand which was able to write the foregoing, will probably find there at last its grand repose.

The news of his death is received on the very day when the Unitarians assemble for their annual celebration as a religious denomination. Their festival is in the Music Hall. Among them there are men, and not a few, (we are inclined to believe that they are a major part,) to whom, though they call themselves Unitarians, this Mr. Parker as a religious teacher is an object of as great aversion as he can be to those of any denomination. Among these are men who, though by education and the force of circumstances they are on one side of a certain line, have not lost their faith in the Bible as a supernatural revelation. There are others who are eclectics with regard to it; receiving it as containing the "Word of God," though not according to it that preëminent name; and we may say that scarcely would two of this part fully agree should they severally make up a new "Word of God" by selections from the Scriptures.

The denomination as such will not recognize Mr. Parker. In fact, they agree that such are the discrepancies among them with regard to him, and in other matters, that they doubt whether they can be said to be a denomination. We quote their own declarations. They are individuals drawn together by historic influences, and held together by a tie which com-



mits no man, and imposes no restraint on a single mind. To all but a few of the most intrepid adventurers into the region of doubt, Mr. Parker is a vexation. Their system begat him; his views are, here and there, conterminous with their own, and with those of no other denomination. They respect his learning, his talents, his zeal; they rejoice in the sturdy blows which he has dealt to the popular theology; but while they acknowledge (for they cannot deny) some kindred between him and them, they are utterly lost as to their reputation and influence if he be acknowledged to be one of them. Ministers are sometimes called to officiate at the funeral of one who has died with a lost reputation, but belonging to a very respectable family. Some prominent members of the community are in the room; cultivated women are there; the association of their presence with the sad life and death of the deceased seems strange, but they are related to the deceased by blood or marriage, and decorum obliges them to appear; the veils are generally dropped, and the sadness on the faces of the very respectable male friends is created by obvious thoughts and feelings which excite in a spectator a mingled love and respect for their consistent fulfilment of a disagreeable duty. They would not be ashamed of their kindred, but they do not propose in this case to make it prominent. That the news of Mr. Parker's death should have reached Boston in the morning of the festival kept by the denomination, seemed like him. Could he have anticipated it in his last hours, it would have been a grateful contemplation. It was viewed here variously by the denomination: by some as a singular coincidence, by others as a providence, and by others a judgment; and by others, still, as an event which they believed could not have been design, and yet was too remarkable for an accident. But it has been left to individuals of the denomination, according to their choice and impulse, to make public mention of Mr. Parker, and to print their discriminating, or their almost unqualified, eulogies. We have seen a bird fall dead in the sea. He had been wounded, perhaps, on some shore, or from a vessel, and yielded at last to the wound. We were tacking, and were not far from him for half an hour. A swift-winged bird, descending from his solitary flight, suddenly dropped its wings over him, and then, with its

short cry, disappeared. There came sailing down another, and then another, and made short curvatures over him, and was gone. But we saw no flock. As we sailed away, we met another bird, and, watching, we saw that he was performing the same irresponsible obsequies. Since Mr. Parker's death we have been interested in the notices taken of him by individual preachers of the Unitarian denomination. We purchased their discourses together and read them with care. There has been no gathering together of the denomination by common consent to do him homage; the churches, the ministry, have not been convened; there is indeed no denominational unity of faith making it practicable to act in such a case; they seem to feel that it is the going down of the sun with them as a sect; but their truths, they feel assured, live, and every member of their communion is free to believe and to reject as many of them as he chooses, and to render just such a measure of respect to Mr. Parker as he pleases; and going as far with him as he will, he shall still remain in full communion and fellowship with the whole. As a denomination they cannot recognize Mr. Parker. But some among them insist that he is the flower of their whole growth. The very excess of his "liberalism," so far from impugning his claim to membership, is to them a most beautiful illustration of their system which they rejoice in saying allows the utmost range of free thought. Therefore these would canonize Mr. Parker. Hear their Secretary once more:

"But we in Boston shall often miss him. When that great Hall shall stand silent and empty, Sunday after Sunday, because no one can be found in our community with ability to keep it filled with the crowds who went to hear him; when plausible pretenders and famous rhetoricians utter their applauded sophisms without contradiction, because our great critic is not here to answer them; when great national crises come and go unanalyzed, because he is not here with his ever-ready brain and well-filled memory to give the immediate judgment which history is hereafter to assign, — in such hours as these we shall remember the greatness and mourn the absence of our Boston Socrates — of our gift of God — our Theodore." (*A Look at the Life*, &c., p. 18.)

Rev. W. H. Channing writes: "But he is free; gone, as

dear Plato says, 'to the good and perfect God, to be associated with better men than those we live with on earth'; ascended, in the words of Marcus Aurelius, 'to the clear ether, free from desires, disease, misfortune; there to see truth with open view; to live with the gods, and the children of the gods, above the highest summit of the heavens; to be ranked among the army of the gods, and to traverse the universe.'

Great and marvellous is the change which the almost entire body of evangelical ministers and Christians of all sects must experience to dwell in the same heaven with "our gift of God, — our Theodore"; — a change of theological opinions, a change of Gospel, of temper, of language, — he being, according to these gentlemen, counted eminently worthy to attain that world. As to living "with the gods, and the children of the gods," according to Mr. Channing and Marcus Aurelius, we confess a great repugnance to it, and we are sorry that Mr. Parker should have been sent to their heaven; for they are but a sorry set, if we have read profane history aright; the most of them could not spend a week in Boston, nor even in New York, without being brought before the Police Court; and their escape from the State Prison would be only on condition of their leaving forthwith for "the clear ether." O melancholy condition of things, when the words of Jesus and the disclosures made in the Bible concerning heaven are shut out from the descriptions and anticipations of professedly Christian ministers in speaking of a deceased preacher, and Marcus Aurelius and a pagan heaven take the place of John in the Apocalypse. A professedly Unitarian minister of our acquaintance made a most discriminating and striking remark on the request of Mr. Parker that only the "Beatitudes" should be read at his grave. "The 'Beatitudes'!" said this gentleman; "Heaven save me from the 'Beatitudes' when I am judged." As one reads the autobiography of Mr. Parker, his assaults on the Old and New Testaments, and on those to whom they are "Fetishes," the words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," "the merciful," "the meek," seem too severe a reprehension to be read at any grave except of one so "pure in heart" that his humility would forbid his making the request.

We repeat it, the evangelical world must experience a great

change to be fit companions for Mr. Theodore Parker in heaven. He declines their company and their heaven, and scorns their hell. Speaking of the "theologic fancy," he says, (p. 77,) "Its narrow, partial, and unnatural Heaven I did not wish to enter on the terms proposed, nor did I fear, since earliest youth, its mythic, roomy Hell, wherein the Triune God, with his pack of devils to aid, tore the Human Race in pieces forever and ever. I came to preach 'another Gospel,' quite unlike," &c. He accounts for the extremely low tone of the Christian world everywhere in this sentence (p. 144): "Because they WORSHIP him, [*i. e.* Christ,] reject the natural goodness he relied upon, and trust in the 'blood of Christ, which maketh free from all sin.'" We certainly do thus "WORSHIP," (quoting his capitals,) and we "trust" in that "blood." We do not see how the Christian world can reach Mr. Parker's "clear ether," and, like him, "live with the gods," without an immense revolution of opinion and practice. The heaven in which we all believe would be no place for Mr. Parker. The fishermen of Galilee would hide at the approach of their great reviewer; "the first three evangelists," for whom he had some contempt, would blush in his presence; the minor prophets would feel smaller than ever. Putting his arm into that of Mr. Thomas Paine, he would propose a walk outside the gates when preparations were making for a song of redemption; for he never liked that music. Mr. Parker as he thought and wrote here, never passed into the heaven of the Bible; and yet he may be there! but if he is there, it is only because "Orthodoxy" is true. We have a faith which permits us to believe that he can be saved; yes, that exclusive, illiberal, bigoted "Orthodoxy," which he spent his life to ridicule and confute, provides a way even for his salvation. In one very respectable Unitarian quarter, a question as to the possibility of his salvation has been publicly expressed, on the ground of his not being "a believer"; for "he that believeth shall be saved."

It is grateful to think of finding him, at last, worshipping at the feet which were nailed to the tree for him, washed in that blood which flowed for his sins. Who knows what may have transpired between his soul and Christ when his senses could no

longer report his secret exercises; who can say that pardon by the atoning death of Jesus, and the full remission of all his sins, were not offered and accepted as a chief illustration of that astonishing grace which is the burden of our evangelical preaching and faith! How he could be saved according to the principles of some consistent Unitarians, we cannot conceive, unless purgatorial remedies be included. But, without purgatory, without any disability proceeding from his past transgressions and unbelief, we can conceive of his passing from earth with the reputation of a chief unbeliever and reviler, to find himself, in consequence of one intelligent act of submission to the way of pardon through faith in Christ, a ransomed soul, vicing with the Mary Magdalenes and the penitent thief and Saul of Tarsus for the lowest place at Jesus' feet, and calling for the most wonderful of all the angelic minstrelsies to celebrate his salvation. "Calvinism" had the reputation with him, as it has with many who survive him, of cruelty; but we repeat it, if that great unbeliever is saved, no other system but the evangelical provides a way in which, at the last hour of life, even he, by faith in a righteousness not his own, and by dependence on blood which is able to save them to the uttermost who come unto God by it, could, through instantaneous regeneration by the Holy Ghost, become a joint heir with those whom he reviled, of infinite grace and glory.

We have shown how Unitarianism allows all its professors to think and speak of Theodore Parker as they please, and still be in good standing with the denomination. This is that liberty of conscience and freedom of thought for which they regard themselves, as, in an especial sense, champions. We shall speak hereafter of the doctrinal bearing of such liberty. But looking at it as a theory of church government, we like this Congregational freedom. The Congregational idea in Protestantism has a large sweep; its cycles are not always within the view of one and the same generation. In other systems things go and return, and go again, with short, swift movement, easily comprehended, quickly adjusted. Though Unitarianism began in England in connection with Presbyterianism, and in this country in the liturgical (though non-prelatical) church of King's Chapel, Boston, showing that "the law made nothing perfect,"

that a strict government and a prescribed creed are not able of themselves to control the great surges of popular change in religion; yet it is true that Unitarianism could not have wrought out its great experiment so well in any system as in Congregationalism. Though in its progress immense harm has been done by it to the souls of men within the past fifty years, yet it has served a purpose in the vast astronomy of truth, and future generations will be wiser, safer, and better for its demonstrations. We are glad to belong to a system which is capable of containing within itself the rise and the setting of such a system as Unitarianism, and still hold on its way, deriving vast advantage from the presence in it and the passage from it of so great an error, — an error which has led to the clearest elucidation and to the demonstration of evangelical doctrine. We have a word for those who, as Unitarianism is going to pieces, are leaping from it into other sects the measured and perfectly comprehensible diameter of whose spheres assure them of protection against new disturbances, because everything is prescribed, and scrutinized, and required to make due record of itself. With entire respect for these systems and their friends, we are bound to say, it is far better for our own mental growth and for our influence, to abide and help to strengthen a system which admits of enormous tides, and needs only better defences, the result of experience, to make it the most powerful ally of civil and religious liberty. We must learn to have patience with heresies, doing the best that we severally judge wise and expedient, assured that all these things are accomplishing results whose scale of admeasurement is sublimely great, and their progress eminently fitted to give the greatest enlargement and cultivation.

All this cannot blind us to the pernicious influences of error. We must continue to hold Unitarianism responsible for Mr. Theodore Parker. But we are glad to acquit every individual in the denomination of sympathy with him in his peculiar tenets, till each is proved to have avowed them. But the denomination has yet some associated action. We have not the least desire to interfere with them, nor shall we impertinently criticize their doings. We are influenced solely by a concern for the influence of God's most holy Word upon the present generation of the young in our community; in the defence of our

churches against fatal error; and in the preservation of the Christian faith in its purity as the only solace of human woe, and the only hope of salvation. And now, disavowing all personal feeling or a desire to indulge in personal allusions, we ask, Who is the present Secretary of the American Unitarian Association and editor of their "Monthly Journal?" Their Board of Officers is composed of men the most of whom are choice spirits;—but who is the Secretary?

He is the chief eulogist of Theodore Parker. In a sermon preached to his own people, January 3, 1860, he calls him "our Boston Socrates,—our gift of God,—our Theodore." (p. 19.) He mourns that the pulpit of the Music Hall is deprived of its great occupant. (p. 18.) "His is a name to stand always high in the catalogue of New England worthies." (p. 17.) "The grandchildren of those who condemned him most bitterly may call on our grandchildren to subscribe for his statue, or to take tickets for the centennial celebration of his birthday." (*Ib.*) "Theodore was the John Baptist of our day,—the prophet of a transition state when the law had ended, but the Gospel only just begun." (*Ib.*) "I think that our master will make for him the same excuse," [that he made for John.] (*Ib.*) "His piety was tender, filial, reverential." (p. 15.) "His convictions were sometimes cruel and severe; in the spirit of Moses, David, and John the Baptist, rather than in that of Christ," (p. 11,)—as though anything in those inspired men ever exceeded in severity the denunciations by the Lord Jesus, or his last sentence upon those on the left hand. But the Secretary has learned in Parker's School how to speak of Moses and David. All this canonizing speech he utters concerning one whose autobiography, written when he was "up to his shoulders in the grave," contains more atrocious invectives against the Bible and the sacred associations of Christendom than can elsewhere be found. True, the Secretary differs from Mr. Parker in some things, but he does it in a loving way. "His Christology, or doctrine of Christ, I have thought defective. His Anthropology, or doctrine of man, somewhat defective too—in important particulars." But still, "Theodore Parker drove the deep subsoil plough of a sound theology under the roots of a false morality and ethics."! (p. 9.)



Here is a man, an ordained minister, who has read Mr. Parker's "Experience," and does not loath him. This is all which need be said on that subject. He is Secretary of the American Unitarian Association, and their editor. He is unquestionably Theodore Parker's choice for that office. He and the Secretary differed widely, and none more so, Mr. Parker somewhere tells us, on religious subjects; but these subjects must have been externals, or speculations, for all which is vital in the religion of Christendom Mr. Parker had rejected, and the Secretary can only say that he thinks Mr. Parker's "Christology" and "Anthropology" were "defective." We wish, just here, to quote one page from Theodore Parker's book, (*Experience, &c.*) promising not to pain our readers any further at present with "A Look at the Life" of this man.

He is describing the influence of "the traditions of the various churches," that is, of the faith and practice of evangelical sects, with which he tells his people of the Music Hall, they "have broken." He says of such influence (p. 119):

"2. It leads to Ecclesiastical Ritualism. This is the more common form in New England, especially in hard men and women. They join a church, and crowd the ecclesiastical meetings. Bodily presence there is thought a virtue; they keep the Sunday severely idle; their ecclesiastical decorum is awful as a winter's night at the North Pole of cold; with terrible punctuality they attend to the ordinance of bread and wine, looking grim and senseless as the death's head on the tombstones close by. Their babies are sprinkled with water, or themselves plunged all over in it; they have morning-prayers and evening-prayers, grace before meat and after meat; nay, they give money for the theological purposes of their sect, and religiously hate men not of their household of faith. Their pious feeling has spent itself in secreting this abnormal shell of ritualism, which now cumbers them worse than Saul's armor on the stripling shepherd lad. What can such Pachyderms of the Church accomplish that is good, with such an elephantiasis to swell, and bark, and fetter every limb? Their religious feeling runs to shell, and has no other influence. They sell rum, and trade in slaves or coolies. They are remorseless creditors, unscrupulous debtors; they devour widows' houses. Vain are the cries of Humanity in such ears, stuffed with condensed wind. Their lives are little, dirty, mean."

A man who is chief eulogist of the miserable author of such foul talk, calling him "our Boston Socrates, our gift of God, our Theodore," we repeat it, is editor of the Unitarian "Monthly Journal," and "Secretary of the American Unitarian Association." We will, if necessary, help maintain the right of the Association to be represented by such a man as its chief executive officer, and by any man whom they may elect; and no one has a right to lift a finger or speak a word against their right; but we will have our opinion as to the moral and religious condition of a sect (as a sect, we say, not as individuals) which chooses thus to be represented to the rest of Christendom. Still, in distinguishing between the sect and the individual, we are reminded of the well-known question of one to the swearing Baron and Bishop. We will repeat it once more, — we care only for the interests of truth and godliness which are receiving vast injury from Theodore Parker's influence; and if the Unitarians will choose to be known to us as a sect through such an exponent, in their official publication, we must blow the trumpet louder to warn men against them. We have said that we believe this gentleman to be Mr. Parker's choice for the position which he holds. "When Theodore Parker was about going away," says the Secretary, "and I went to see him for the last time, he followed me to the door of his study, and, putting his hands on my shoulders, he kissed my cheek, and said, 'James, if you and I never meet again in this world, we have the happiness of knowing that there has never been one word, or one feeling, or one action of unkindness.'" "In the Old World," continues the Secretary, "you will see men who carry in their button-holes a red ribbon — the sign that they belong to the Legion of Honor. As long as I live I shall carry (not apparent to others, but known to myself) the mark of that tender, fraternal kiss on my cheek. It is to me the sign of belonging to the Legion of Honor." (*"Tributes to Theodore Parker,"* &c. p. 54.) He is the man, of all men, to carry out Mr. Parker's great designs, so far as having him in admiration is a qualification, and — negatively — not having the least repugnance to him as a great spoiler of reverence for God's most holy Word. Now if those in the denomination who secretly sympathize with Mr. Parker, wish for one to represent them to the world,

Mr. Parker has given them a sign : " Whomsoever I shall kiss, the same is he ; hold him fast." We do not say these things because we apprehend that he can do great harm. His efforts in connection with Mr. Parker's memory do not awaken any such apprehensions. Our only concern is to let our readers know what the tendencies and designs of a system must be whose associated friends shall persist in holding him forth as a principal officer. As to himself, he has laid himself open to raillery, or something more severe, in these printed efforts of his, if any one were so ungenerous as to catch him up in his *abandon* of love and grief, and hold him punctiliously amenable, in such a state of mind, to even the plain rules of common or metaphysical speech. For, if it were kindly brought to his attention that he had incautiously allowed himself to say, (p. 6,) that " the main characteristic of his (Mr. Parker's) knowledge was that it was *live* knowledge," (he italicizing the word,) or, (p. 8,) " What Parker knew he knew, and he knew that he knew it ;" or that (p. 10) he had utterly confounded imagination and fancy ; or that he, a graduate, if we mistake not, of Harvard College, wrote (p. 12), " I have already spoke of him in the Music Hall ;" or had told us, in writing, (p. 14,) that " some men are to be pitied for their forlorn ignorance of the nobilities of the human soul," — he would at once draw his pen through these blemishes, and pity one who could be severe upon such proofs of self-forgetfulness during the raptures of an apotheosis.

We had intended to dwell at some length, but our limited space forbids, on the other Discourses noted at the head of this article. They furnish food for reflection to all who watch the present tendencies of religious thought in this community ; and for this reason we may hereafter open to our readers some of the remarkable things which are contained in those productions. If we do, it will be because we have taken Mr. Theodore Parker at his word when he says, on the last page but two of his " Experience : " " I AM CONTENT TO SERVE BY WARNING, WHERE I CANNOT GUIDE BY EXAMPLE."

## ARTICLE IV.

## POETRY.

THE following lines are from the pen of a young lady of Massachusetts. They are her first printed effusion. We have sought permission to insert them as a rather remarkable specimen of skill in the management of verse. The lines refer to an excursion which took place just one year preceding the day on which they were written. — EDS.

## OUR SEA-SHORE.

How we loved that rock-bound sea-shore, and that ocean of delight!  
How we loved to watch the dashing of the waters gay and bright!  
To see each little wavelet, so full of life and play,  
With a laugh up spring so lightly, to catch a moon-lit ray,  
And then, with a gleeful, brilliant smile, dash onward to the shore,  
Close to our feet to bring his prize, and haste away for more!

Many a heart in time beat lightly,

Smiling faces beamed as brightly,

While the gushes of our gladness made the rocky shore resound;

For we laid aside all sorrow,

All care, till the coming morrow,

Since Nature, in her bounty, spread such beauty all around.

Ay, we loved our own fair sea-shore, dipping its feet in ocean  
blue,

Each moss-bound rock, or smooth, or rough, or by th' wave tear-  
stained, we knew;

Yet "Gun Rock" loved we most of all, such welcomes glad it gave,  
As in the yawning chasm dashed the waters wild and brave!

We loved that wide-spread ocean page, each fair unfolded shell,  
Where Nature's purest type revealed, "He doeth all things well."

Then we sat us still and listened,

When the Sea's moist eyes soft glistened,

As she sang so clear her cherished lay of beauty, love, and light;

And then, her breast upheaving,

With a heart of quickened beating,

Joined Ocean's richer chorus of majesty and might.



One and another shall cross that shore till all are welcomed home.  
Then we'll list Heaven's arches ringing  
With a rare melodious singing,  
And we, too, will join the harpers wreathing praises round the throne.

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## ARTICLE V.

## ACCIDENTS OR PROVIDENCES, WHICH?

It is said that in his flight for Mecca, Mohammed sought concealment and rest in a cave by the way-side. After his entrance a spider spread its net across the mouth of the cave. His pursuers, intent on his death and examining every covert, paused at this one. But, seeing the insect-net, they judged that he could not have entered there, and so passed on. Some say that thus an accident saved the entire and vast Mohammedan power from being destroyed in its infancy. Was this insect trifling an accidental preservation of the Moslem power in its germ? Or shall we say that God thus wrapped up and protected in cobwebs a force that would break up armies and nations?

An event may take place without our foresight. It may come from an unknown cause. It may be a strange effect, to appearance, of a supposed known cause. It may be contrary to our earnest, waiting expectation. It may come so unawares that our every thought of it must be an after-thought. It may come as a sudden and terrible defeat of our most sacred desires, purposes, and labors. It may come full of surprising and mysterious mercies. The way of life to individuals and communities shows many of these events. They affect variously our treasures, hopes, plans, friends, and life.

Men divide these events into Providences and Accidents. The favor that comes through unforeseen and strange concurrence of circumstances is called a providence, while the calamity is called an accident.

Now if the term, accident, as thus used, were a softened and more grateful term for unexpected or sorrowful event, it would be well enough. But there is frequently glided under that word, the substance of the idea that the event did not share in the ordinary supervision of God. Nay, more. There is the feeling, often, that had God attended and brought his usual providence to bear, the event would have been otherwise.

Herein lies an error, and it is deep and wide-working. For it leaves men in the discussion of events to admit or dispense with the agency of God in them. In some terrible railroad casualty the life of one man is saved from imminent danger, and men call his escape a particular providence. Another, sitting beside him, is mutilated to a terrible death, and they call this event to him an accident. A third, whose home is in sight of the catastrophe, lives a life unmarked by any peculiar incident, and dies a common death, in a ripe old age, on the bed where he has slept nightly these fifty years; and they say nothing about providence in his case. The drift of which criticism is, that in some events God is very attentive, even to directing, toward others indifferent or inefficient, and of yet others as unobservant as if occurring outside the range of his dominion.

Such a feeling, and it is not uncommon, on the subject of accidents, limits the presence, shortens the arm, and restricts the supervision of God. This modern and popular theory of accidents is the outgrowth of a false theology. It is an old Arminian notion, whose advocates number more than would willingly and openly espouse this ancient heresy. It is a theology that concedes to God a limited monarchy over matter, and an elective monarchy over free agents. It ranks him among men as superintendent of contingencies. It allows him foreordination, but the plans in which it lies and is to be executed, are based on and made to be coincident with what he foresees his creatures will do. So God's decrees are but his indorsement or permission in advance of what he foresees must take place. It allows him foreknowledge of the actions of man; but he obtains this, not by knowing how the causes that he will ordain, connect, and make operative, will produce events; he divines what man, with a self-determining will,



and acting independently of all motives, will do. It allows him an election of men unto salvation, but it is an election following the person who is already predetermined in his own will, or by his own endeavors, to be saved. It is an election, not leading and causing, but pursuing and consenting, — an election that does not cast, but only counts and declares the votes. Of course such a theology gives a large place for accidents, and for those unsupported sorrows that come with accidents to him believing in them. An accident, in the common and moral use of this word, means an event that has no divine mind designing and controlling it. It is fortuitous or hap-hazard as outside the circle of the divine power, or as a lawless marauder inside. Is there any such event under the government of God? Do the elements of his character and government allow us to suppose such an event as possible?

God is everywhere, at all times, and at the same time. He sees all that has been, all that is, all that shall be, and all that might be, yet never shall be. The arm of God is the only power that works a change in anything, at any time. There is no motion, no variation, in things animate or inanimate, but, directly or indirectly, it is of God. He keeps every substance and being, be it mineral or vegetable, solid or fluid, brute, human, or angelic, from dissolving, and returning to primitive, chaotic atoms. God is of service for the world besides creating it and starting it with a system of forces. And we must not exile him under the delusion that we shall have anything remaining, abiding, and operative in what we call the constitution and course of Nature, natural forces, or natural laws. These are but the modes, the habits of God in his omnipresent and perpetual working. He is not, in creation, like a clock-maker, constructing his machine, winding it up, and then ever sitting idly by to see it run. "In Him we live and move and have our being," — a fact equally at home in the outside field of philosophic truths and in the inside field of inspired truths.

Few learned delusions are more popular than that a law is a power. It is but a mode, the uniform manifestation of a power. It is the channel for the stream. The statute of a State is nothing except as it is filled, vitalized, and energized by the

will of the State. At this very point old English deism, French infidelity, and the modern reproduction of the two in German neology, diverge from the path of Christian philosophy. Those earlier sceptics assumed that force inheres in matter, and is an essential element of its nature, and is itself the ultimate cause of all activity in matter. Newton, on the Christian side, referred all action and changes in matter to a spiritual cause. Modern Christian philosophy follows in the same line of truth. Says Professor Guyot, "What is a law but a permanent act of the Divine Will? What is a development but the existence or realization in time and space of this Supreme Will?"\* And Professor Peirce, of Cambridge, speaking of an inherent and fixed force in matter, which would secure perpetual motion, says: "It may not perhaps be incompatible with the unbounded power of the Creator; but if it had been introduced into nature, it would have proved destructive to human belief in the spiritual origin of force, and the necessity of a first cause superior to matter, and would have subjected the grand plans of Divine Benevolence to the will and caprice of man."†

Here force in nature is referred back directly to a divine source, and so natural laws are resolved into divine modes of action. Professor Dana of New Haven puts this point in the same light, when, speaking of natural laws, he calls them "the laws which God has established in nature, or rather the methods in which he is constantly working in the universe." [Bib. Sac. 13: 82.]

All this is good Christian philosophy. And it is good theology too. It shows God as "a God at hand, and not a God afar off." "To represent God," says Calvin, "as a Creator only for a moment, who entirely finished all his work at once, were frigid and jejune; and in this it behoves us especially to differ from the heathen." "If any one falls into the hands of robbers, or meets with wild beasts; if by a sudden storm he is shipwrecked on the ocean; if he is killed by the fall of a house or a tree; if another, wandering through deserts, finds relief for

\* "On the Concordance of the Mosaic Account of the Creation with that given by Modern Science." — Lectures before the Spingler Institute, New York. 1852. Bib. Sacra, 12: 333.

† "A System of Analytic Mechanics." Boston: Little, Brown & Company, p. 31.

his penury, or, after having been tossed about by the waves, reaches the port, and escapes, as it were, but a hair's breadth from death, — carnal reason will ascribe all these occurrences, both prosperous and adverse, to fortune. But whoever has been taught from the mouth of Christ, that the hairs of his head are all numbered, will seek further for a cause, and conclude that all events are governed by the secret counsel of God. And respecting things inanimate it must be admitted, that though they are all naturally endued with their peculiar properties, yet they exert not their power, any further than as they are directed by the present hand of God. They are, therefore, no other than instruments into which God infuses as much efficacy as he pleases, bending and turning them to any actions, according to his will." "In the creatures there is no erratic power, or action, or motion; but they are so governed by the counsel of God that nothing can happen but what is subject to his knowledge, and decreed by his will. First, then, let the readers know that what is called providence describes God, not as idly beholding from heaven the transactions which happen in the world, but as holding the helm of the universe, and regulating all events." [Institutes, B. 1, c. 16.]

This is not only Calvinism but Christianity. The arch-angel folds his tireless wing, but as he borrows Almighty power for the act. No microscopic vermin infests man or beast in the land of the Pharaohs, but the magician of the Nile and the modern scholar in natural science shall be forced to say, "This is the finger of God." No comet gleams across the angry heavens, no continent is rocked and submerged, no angel, no sparrow falls, no spider hangs his dewy web, no snow-flake falls on the wandering footsteps of a lost Franklin, but God with infinite thought and perfect care supervises each cause, every circumstance and all the consequences.

Otherwise how does he govern the world? Of necessity there can be no general administration of a perfect government without securing the particulars. Can there be the river without the springs, the deluge without the drops, the web without the threads, the thread without the fibres of the cotton?

If God measure not the wind and guide not the waves on the troubled Adriatic in such way as to drift that floating spar

to the swimming, sinking boy, Columbus, what shall become of a hidden continent, a new world, and God's unfolding providences along this Western horizon? God had need of that spar, perhaps all that he needed of some wrecked argosy. And when he did bear up on it that tired boy, he did also lift up from its unknown bed of waters, for the eyes of all coming time to behold, this Western world, and our vast empire, washed by two oceans. To secure a universal providence in the administration of the world, that spar, the wind, the waves, the time, the place, — all conspiring, all conjoining, — were indispensable items in the arrangements of God, as the governor of the world.

So are the forces of nature but the varied power of God and the laws of nature but the modes of God. And so the incidents that shape nations and times are inexorable instruments of God. Where, then, is the place for a casualty, a happening, an accident? What vacuum has God left into which it may thrust itself?

Nor is this general providence of God confined to inanimate nature and the brute kingdom. Human acts, even to idle words, must share in his minutest superintendence, if he would make his counsel stand, and he do all his pleasure. The actions of man, though trivial, careless, and thoughtless, must not only not be productive of accidents, but must serve as cogs and springs and levers in the machinery by which God manages the world. A single historical fact will show and confirm this point quite as well as a long argument.

Within one hundred years of the rise of the Mohammedan power, Moslem arms had conquered Arabia, Persia, Syria, Africa, and Spain. And still that tide of steel swept on. It followed in the channels of power. It chafed along the Pyrenees. It swelled and rose and poured itself over into sunny France. The one question of Europe, Asia, and Africa was, Mohamimed or Christ? The Crescent or the Cross? Against this incoming, and thus far irresistible, flood some of the Germanic tribes united under Charles Martel. The hostile forces met on the plains about Tours in A. D. 732. The array was fearfully superior against the Christians, and the second day of battle saw their ranks wasting away. And still Arab scimeter

and spear and war-horse pressed on more victoriously. To resist was like resisting the swollen torrent that has been accumulating forces all the way from the distant mountains. Suddenly the words were uttered by a son of the Prophet, "The enemy plunder our camp!" The false rumor spread like wild-fire among the Mohammedans, and they turned in masses to defend the spoils of many a well-fought field and plundered city. It seemed as if they fled. Under this delusive appearance the Christians rallied, and the victory was turned. That tide of steel was rolled back over the Pyrenees, across Spain, past the Pillars of Hercules into Africa. By that victory Europe was rescued from Mohammed for Christ. So the Anglo-Saxon mind, that was to sway the world, was reserved for a Christian tutelage. And those idle words of alarm were the pivot on which the whole turned. The false report was a trifle at first, yet how wide among the continents and the centuries the sweep of its consequences! It was one of "those few battles of which a contrary event would have essentially varied the drama of the world in all its subsequent scenes."\* But history is full of these pivots. Are they fixed at random? And is God still the governor of the earth? Then is the world in a perpetual mob of casualties, and the King of kings ever and vainly reading the riot-act.

The infidel historian has scoffingly remarked, that had that victory been otherwise, "perhaps the interpretation of the Koran would now be taught in the schools of Oxford, and her pulpits might demonstrate to a circumcised people the sanctity and truth of the revelation of Mahomet."†

Yet how had the "perhaps" of the sceptic been made impossible by the previous arrangement and present superintendence of a sovereign God. Allow for a moment that the poising, the turn, and issue of that battle were fortuitous, and we feel that we are without a government. The divine one spoken of is but an inspired fiction, a pretence.

And so we conclude that in the whole world of matter and of spirit there is no place for the hap and chance of the popular feeling. All agents, material and spiritual, that could otherwise work an accident, are wholly under the supervision of Him

\* Hallam.

† Gibbon's "Roman Empire," (Guizot's Ed.) 2: 253.

who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. So there is no room for a casualty or accident, in the sense that it is an event independent of the design and control of the Divine mind.

This conclusion, however, is not acceptable to many. They think it unworthy of God that he should superintend these little matters. Yet the great men, who have left their chapter in the history of the world, have been men of wonderful minuteness and particularity in their plans. Says Bancroft, in his inimitable portrait of the character of Washington: "No detail was too minute for his personal inquiry and complete supervision." It is the folly of youth and of a narrow mind to seek results without the provision of causes and the accumulation of items. Great achievements are aggregations of smaller and often apparently trifling ones, any one of which, being lost, all is lost.

No doubt God foresaw a place and a use for the Mohammedan power, as an instrument in his hand. So he saved it by that trifle in its infancy. Disconnected and isolated, the item seems a trifle. Its relations give it importance. The arithmetical cipher is nothing alone, but connected it is more than any figure. So of those events under the providence of God, that men call trifles unworthy of his attention. Let him locate and connect them, and in the great problem of governing the world they shall stand the most important figures. And so it is not only worthy of him to look after them, but as the God of providence he has a necessity for doing it. Suppose one hailstone may fall accidentally, without the design and control of God. Then it may derange all his plans for a country or the world, and for centuries. For in its hap-hazard wanderings to the earth, it may destroy the uplifted eye of a gazing boy, and ever after a sightless Newton be led in some obscure path to a forgotten grave. Who now shall be God's interpreter of nature? Who spring light on the darkened centuries? Who open the eyes of a blind world, to see the glory of the Creator in the laws by which he governs the universe? Nay, but it is worthy the Great God to look after that frozen globule of the sky. The falling drop, as the falling angel, must receive the oversight of the governing mind of the universe.

In the battle of Ramoth Gilead, a common Syrian soldier draws a bow "at a venture." He shoots among the enemy as a sportsman shoots into a flock. He does not destine or guide the arrow specifically. Yet, as if instinct with life, and impelled by one purpose, it finds the fatal weakness in a suit of royal armor, and the apostate King of Israel cries out. The day of heaven had come for him to lay aside kingdom and crown. Underlying and overruling what man calls an accident, was the purpose of God. The arm of the Almighty strained that bow, and the eye of the Infinite guided that arrow. And when in that battle a disguised King exclaimed, "I am wounded!" there hung in the bleeding side of Ahab, the wicked, a shaft from the quiver of God. So, with a single arrow, and the freak of an archer, the Lord opens his way among the nations. Quaintly, graphically, and most tersely does an old divine set forth the fact and the doctrine in this case: "Oh, the just and mighty hand of that Divine Providence, which directs all his actions to his own ends, which orders where every shaft shall light, and guides the arrow of the stray archer into the joints of Ahab's armor! It was shot 'at a venture,' it falls by a destiny, and there falls where it may carry death to a hidden debtor." \*

Others present a more formidable objection to this theory of providences as precluding accidents. They say that such a sovereignty destroys the freedom and so accountability of the subject. This objection is more plausible than reasonable or scriptural, for it is predicated rather on a want of knowledge, than on any evidence that the sovereignty interferes with the freedom of man. And it rises against any system of religion, orthodox or heterodox, Christian or Jewish, Mohammedan or Pagan, that supposes God sovereign and man free. It is a difficulty inherent in all systems that acknowledge a supreme Deity. A single remark must, therefore, suffice in passing by a mystery that is the common inheritance of all creeds.

At this point in Christian doctrine we stand in darkness that can be felt. God works all things after the counsel of his own will, and man freely executes that will. The fact is ours by reve-

\* Bishop Hall. *Contemplations, in loco.*



lation; the mode is by concealment with God. It becomes us to be content with the two truths, though we see not their mutual embrace. Practically they harmonize. It is only in our theories and philosophies that they seem to stand asunder. Ill does it befit us, therefore, to mar the perfect government of the Most High in an effort to gain a theoretical liberty for man, that his consciousness does not ask for, or feel the need of. And equal folly is it in us to insist on the introduction of a rival and independent power within the realm of that government, which, working accidents, may thrust us out of the realm and protection of the government.

And least of all should we allow any of these dark providences to overcloud our faith in God. For an accident, so called, is only a sudden and unexpected providence, and the darkness that may obscure its utility to the eye of reason, should not obscure its superintending cause to the eye of faith. Otherwise we make our understanding limit the goodness and power of God. There is a wreck on the ocean, and one hundred souls perish, and one hundred die of ship-fever on quarantine the same day. Why is one event any more inconsistent with his power or wisdom or goodness than the other? Both were under his control, or it is vain to pray for those on the ocean and in hospitals. One dies of the careless discharge of firearms, and another by lightning. Should the death of the former shock our confidence in the protection of God any more than that of the latter? One is mutilated by a railroad car and dies instantly, while his twin brother is consumed, in slow agony, by a cancer. Is the difficulty of harmonizing the first death with a perfect providence any greater than when we consider the second? God held the issues of life in both cases. To come to the very centre of this great difficulty in all religions and creeds, the question is not one of the quantity of evil, or of its time, or place, or mode. It is, why and whence evil at all under the government of a perfect God? This is a question beyond human solution, and he treats it most wisely who recedes from it into the region of fact and faith, that God, the sovereign ruler, is always everywhere, and only good, in all events that he appoints and permits to affect us.

This system of unexpected and strange providences shows its advantages at once to a reflecting mind. Man is here in a state of probation, and so of trial, and the suspense and solicitude in which this system keeps him are of the highest moral value. God overrides our plans, breaks the ties that bind us to worldly interests and friends, and drops the curtain of life at eve, or morn, or midday. He permits the prudent man to step into the grave and the careless one to stumble over it. Sometimes, in a wide calamity, he suffers the falling tower in Siloam to overwhelm in a common burial the prepared and the unprepared. In all which he presses the probationer to immediate and daily activity in all moral duty, and enters his solemn protest against the common management of spiritual life on the credit system. These sudden and afflictive providences, that sometimes clothe a family, or city, or state, in mourning, and that are robbed of much of their divine import by being called accidents, fill a most important place among the means that Heaven designs to qualify us for life and death. And their power to benefit man is much in the proportion of their mysterious suddenness and of his consequent inability to escape them.

And the theory of providence here presented furnishes the only refuge under mysterious afflictions. If there may be an event strictly accidental, then no part of the king's highway is safe for the pilgrim subject. For the government of God is limited. Its intention is good, and its practice perfect, so far as it goes. But there are elements in the kingdom, rival, adverse, and owing allegiance to chance. They are as bandits in the territory, within the realm but beyond the law. So is the presence or the liability of an accident a deficiency in the divine government. It may be supplemented by compensatory, remedial, and restorative acts, but this would be a confession of weakness, and rather augment than remove the anxieties of the subject. But if the Lord God Omnipotent reigns and none can stay his hand, then his subject can say, "What time I am afraid I will trust in thee." A throne that is never jarred, a purpose that is never foiled, a plan that is never varied by addition, subtraction or alteration, a supremacy that groups and governs all matter and all spirit in all their changes and rest, and the whole animated and executed by infinite justice and

infinite goodness,—this is the government of God that offers a refuge to the afflicted. It is an ample retreat, and the only one.

“ One adequate support  
For the calamities of mortal life  
Exists, one only ; an assured belief  
That the procession of our fate, howe'er  
Sad or disturbed, is ordered by a Being  
Of infinite benevolence and power,  
Whose everlasting purposes embrace  
All accidents, converting them to good.”

It is both common and popular among moral teachers to keep silence or speak lightly and imperfectly of the Absolute Monarchy of God. Among us this tendency is favored by the genius of our institutions, in which popular sovereignty is the governing element. This democratic feeling is infused into much of the reigning theology. The pulpit proclaims it, and the pew applauds. Foreordination is said to mean only foreknowledge. The decrees of God are his indorsement in advance of what he foresees will come to pass. His plans have an elastic accommodation to emergencies produced by contingent free will in man and the fortuitous concurrence of independent and self-sustaining forces in matter. And that it may be made sure, to those wishing it, that “all things work together for good to them that love God,” greater power for repairing, than controlling and preventing, is given to him, and overruling is conceded where ruling was denied. Such a theology bases the government of heaven in part on constituencies and casualties. It infringes on absolute sovereignty, and so virtually advocates anarchy. It gives accidents the precedence and makes the divine government a secondary and restoring process. Such a theology assigns to God rather a struggle for the sovereignty than sovereignty itself.

It reminds us of that myth of Plato in his *Politicus*, in which the philosopher seems as one seeking for the light, yet still wandering in the gray dawn of the day. According to the myth, when God governs absolutely all goes happily. But at times the innate and independent forces of matter have control. The divine pilot is no longer at the helm. Disorder, evil, and woe reign till God recovers his lost power and repairs the injuries of

temporary anarchy. Christianity gives us a better idea of Providence than this, and the Pulpit ought to furnish us better teaching than the Academy.

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## ARTICLE VI.

### TRANSCENDENTAL SCIENCE.

It is a significant indication of some prevailing tendencies among us, that transcendentalism is no longer a term of reproach. In some fields, it is generally admitted to have not only an intelligible but an indispensable place. It is more and more clearly and widely recognized by vigorous thinkers, that in psychology there can be no exposition of freedom, and in ethics no establishment of an ultimate rule of right, except by a process purely transcendental. But in physical science the ground is still strongly contested. The loudest voices declare that, in this field, all transcendental speculation is both impertinent and fruitless. The naturalist affirms that the actual facts of nature are all that science has need to explain, or the scientific explorer has power to investigate. Denunciations of any *a priori* philosophy of nature are as bold and arrogant among so-called scientific men, as they are frequent. And yet nothing can be more unphilosophical, and nothing more contradictory to the very basis upon which the naturalist himself rests his investigations. For surely this basis is an *a priori* one, else is it nothing stable. The cardinal doctrine that matter occupies space is ideally gained and does not result from any induction on the field of our experience. Space can never be brought into our experience; on the contrary, our experience is ever occurring in space. But this no sense can reveal, and the experimental philosopher is therefore obliged to transcend experience at the very outset of his procedure. The same is true not only in reference to the other cardinal properties of matter, but all through the researches of science. Though discarding,

in words, transcendental speculation, every naturalist holds to it and stands upon it, at every step of his way. Any syllogism, deductive or inductive, can claim validity for a moment, only as it rests ultimately upon what no syllogism could produce. If there be nothing which cannot be proved, then is there nothing which can be proved. "They," said Theophrastus, "who seek a reason for all things overthrow all reason." "To deny that anything is evident of itself unto man," said Hooker, "is to destroy the possibility of knowing anything."

Moreover, it is to be noted, that the mere classification of the facts of nature, by which some particular fact is referred to a more general one termed a law, is far enough from being science. It is not a knowledge of nature which we thus possess, for knowledge is the agreement in consciousness of an object with our ideal, and hence involves a transcendental element in its very being. That which is made must be expounded by that which is unmade, — the thing seen must be penetrated and informed by the truth unseen; else is it only an object of belief, not of knowledge, — a matter of opinion, not of science.

Furthermore, any professed explanation of one fact by another, so far from enlarging the domain of our knowledge, only transfers us to a wider field of ignorance. When we seek the reason why, in any particular case, we assuredly do not find it by simply learning that it is the same which works other and grander results. Nothing can be more absurd than to suppose that I know what makes the apple fall, as soon as I learn that it is the same power that holds the planets in their places. I ask for an explanation and am answered: gravity; — but the response, reduced to its simple meaning, is only the truism: whatever is, is, — in other words: that which makes the apple fall, is that which made it fall. To say that this power produces many other effects does not explain any one of them. Though we suppose ourselves thus to have comprehended the facts, they are really more incomprehensible than before, just in proportion to their greater extent. We have not increased our knowledge, but have only, in truth, affirmed our ignorance in broader terms. If in the last resort we introduce a *Deus*

*ex machina*, to cut the knot which we cannot untie, this is only a still broader fact, which explains nothing, and is as void of all rational signification as the one with which we first started. A God who is only necessary in order to expound nature, needs himself an exposition as much as nature does. Moreover, even such a Deity is altogether beyond experience; and Humboldt was therefore more consistent than most modern naturalists when he excluded God entirely from his "Cosmos." We should not mourn over his irreligion while we cling to a method of investigating nature whose legitimate result would lead us also to ignore both absolute truth and an absolute Deity.

The truth is, all science which is not properly transcendental is both unphilosophical and irreligious,—unphilosophical, because it offers no rational and self-sufficient principle for the explanation of nature, and irreligious, because its highest generalization, to which it gives the name of first cause, is only assumed to be first, in contradiction to the very process by which its being has been affirmed. If the reason did not by its own immediate insight know God, and could believe only in the Deity derived from experience and induction, then all reverence and worship would be impossible. We could not adore gravitation, we could not love some grand law of central forces; and just as little could we offer these exercises to the power next beyond these, which the logical understanding affirms to be, but of which it can predicate neither freedom, nor love, nor self-origination.

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## ARTICLE VII.

### NATURE-WORSHIP; ITS ROOT AND ITS FRUIT.

THE remark is a correct one, that popular literature has never been so tinged with a religious hue as now; but, unfortunately, not with the Christian religion distinctively. Thus, we open a volume of Schiller and read:—"I find in the Christian system

the rudiments virtually of the highest and noblest. In its pure form it is a representing of moral beauty, or the incarnation of the Holy." This sounds hopefully,—a vibration, one would gladly believe, from a harp over whose strings the heavenly wind is playing. But listen again:—"A healthy poetic nature wants no moral law, no rights of man. It wants no Deity, no immortality, to stay and uphold itself withal. These points, round which ultimately all speculation turns, can never become concerns of serious necessity for it." We pause and ask, Under what dispensation are we here? Does this belief know what it worships? Nor can we find any sensible relief from our misgivings when a kindred spirit, Carlyle, assures us that "Schiller, too, had his religion; was a worshipper; and so in his earthly sufferings wanted not a heavenly stay. In all relations, conditions, he is blameless, amiable. That high purpose after spiritual perfection which with him was a love of poetry, and an unwearied, active love, is itself, when pure and supreme, the necessary parent of good conduct, as of noble feeling. With all men it should be pure and supreme, for, in one or the other shape, it is the true end of man's life. Neither in any man is it ever wholly obliterated; with the most, however, it remains a passive sentiment, an idle wish." With due respect for brilliant genius, and a yet higher reverence for all honest, earnest doubt, we are constrained to repeat the inquiry, Is this our New Testament of redemption and holiness, or is it a *newer* still? What simple reader of the Gospel (and these are the best readers of it) would ever conjecture that the above text and comment could claim the same parentage with the words of the evangelists?

We turn to another of this school of naturalists,—the recluse and pensive Novalis. "Man announces himself and his gospel of nature. He is the Messiah of nature. . . . There is but one temple in the world, and that is the body of man. Nothing is holier than this high form. Bending before men is a reverence done to this revelation in the flesh. We touch heaven when we lay our hand upon a human body." This is the careful utterance of a profoundly devout spirit, according to the system thus set forth; nature-faith and nature-worship reaching nigh on unto perfection. If there be light here, it is not



sunlight; there is no warmth in it. We shiver as in an ice-cellar. One step more only into sheer pantheism, if we are not already out on its drear waste. And Mr. Waldo Emerson stands ready to tell us that "prayer" to God is an absurdity, because this "supposes dualism and not unity in nature and consciousness" — between God and us; that is, that we and God are not the same entity. We are not surprised, therefore, to find this writer styling the doctrine of a "pure theism" an "untruth"; nor yet, further, to hear him in his self-deification say, "No law can be sacred to me but that of my own nature: good and bad are but names very readily transferable to this or that. The only right is what is after my constitution; the only wrong what is against it." We are even informed, on what we believe to be reliable authority, that, on a winter day, this gentleman has been heard — standing at his window — to say, in grave soliloquy, "I snow"; "I rain"; "I blow"! One would think it almost as baffling to get up a consciousness of personally performing these functions — except it may be the *last* — as to feel individually responsible for the original apple-eating of Eden. The latter, we fancy, were decidedly the easier.

What nature-worship is cannot be condensed within the terms of a definition. But by a somewhat circuitous route we may arrive at a distinct enough idea of its form and spirit, albeit these are of a very impalpable and evanescent quality.

To believe and to adore, in some sort, are as natural to us as to listen and to wonder. A constitutional capacity for religion is as much a part of our souls as is such a capacity for artistic culture and enjoyment. The main question of religion is, acceptableness with God. Just here, then, a multitude of writers meet us maintaining that this question is satisfactorily settled by the concession now freely made; that is, they contend that every person, by virtue of his capacity to be sincerely religious, is in some degree a devout and spiritual man — does love God and his neighbor with a genuine love. The measure of that degree is the amount of training bestowed upon this naturally implanted germ. Piety is but the progressive development, under favorable influences, of this original attribute of humanity. In some, indeed, that force lies dormant, overlaid by accumulations of base rubbish, paralyzed by adverse causes. Would

such an one redeem his character and destiny from so unworthy a bondage ? His better nature must be exercised, cleared from vile restraints by energetic efforts at self-emancipation. The mingled elements within him, by some process of self-clarifying, must be separated ; the grosser must subside, the more ethereal be fixed and made dominant.

This is for substance the theory of a salvation which is sufficient unto itself. This is its root. That root throws out various growths. Some flourish with much of leafy verdure, of heavenward stature ; they look very like the trees of life in the midst of the Lord's garden. Others present but an earthward, stunted, miserable aspect. But the underground growth, not that which is above ground, determines the quality of the fruit as essentially the same and worthless.

The world by its own wisdom knows not God. Intellectuals which have delighted and instructed us on every other subject, only have made spiritual darkness denser by all their efforts to scatter its mists. Very often they show us a vigorous grasp of thought, a far-seeing eye, an admirable power of patient reflection, a captivating tenderness of tearful sadness. But what avails it to a soul trembling to its centre with the questions of life's mysteries, obligations, destinies, — full of doubts, disbeliefs, strugglings of half-fledged faiths, — to be told to rally itself by its own courage when it has no courage ; to draw hope and repose out of its own dry wells of salvation ; to lay its flushed cheek down on the calm lap of Nature, and amid her solitudes to still its perturbations into rest ? Yet what more does this self-inspired gospel really tell us than that ? We have seen, and shall yet further see, how far away from Christ speculation may travel under guidance of its highest priesthood, when it goes forth under the lights of earth instead of heaven to erect altars to Nature instead of Grace.

It is this scheme of mere naturalism, in many a shifting shape, now robing itself in unintelligible mysticism, and now speaking the language of common life, which is expelling from the more cultivated and fashionable classes of society the severer truths of evangelists and apostles ; while men are learning that they are of the godlike, the saintly of the earth, because their sympathies and tastes are impressible by the graceful and

the grand in nature and in "high art"; because their bosoms are accessible to sentiments of pleasure in presence of the true, the beautiful, and the good. And so, by this simply natural generation, Mr. Parker assures us that "in some men religion is a continual growth. They are always in harmony with God. Silently and unconscious, erect as a palm-tree, they grow up to the measure of a man. They are born saints, aborigines of heaven. These men need no priest nor outward oracle to teach them the divine will, for they find it written in their own souls. They are called of God even before their birth, and take to religion as naturally as the lark to the air and her morning song." But how men thus spontaneously take to the upper heavens of devoutness becomes considerably problematical, when we find the calendar of saintship, according to this revelation of good news to earth, including not only a Paul and Augustine and Bunyan and Bernard, (if indeed all these names could gain admittance there,) but also a Mohammed and Shakspeare and Burns and Boswell! For these "born saints" are not those inoffensive characters which never do any harm through a constitutional inertness of temperament; on the contrary, a pretty liberal allowance of what the world ordinarily regards as positive sinning seems not to vacate the claim of this congenital saintliness. The idea seems to be this: that if a person discovers in himself any strong aspirings after what is noble and right, any earnest purpose after some great end, however transient and fitful those impulses be, however wide of the truth that earnest purpose is, it matters not; they are sufficiently if not equally assured of the favor of the Infinite, worship they what and how they may.

As nature-faith is essentially but the self-culture of the powers and instincts and graces of humanity, so is its devotion or the expression of its worship but the exercise of that reverence or veneration which is constitutional in us. It is the awakening of the susceptibilities to feelings of awe and tenderness; the wondering or the melting mood; the gushing forth of appropriate emotion in presence of scenes of beauty and power. We know how thoughts which commonly are kept in a mere earthly thrall will sometimes slip their tether and "wander through eternity." It is then that we realize our

God-capacity and necessity. It is as if all the doors behind us, which have led us through the several apartments of our lives thus far, were shut, and a veil were lifted before us revealing a Higher and a Future of strangely vivid and arresting significance. In these impressions of the outward upon our sympathies and passions, a refined but futile religionism has proclaimed the practical manifestation of our native piety ; that is, acceptable worship.

A very broad margin is allowed for the vanities of this devotion, reminding one strongly of our Lord's remark to the woman at Jacob's Well : " Ye worship ye know not what." Thus the former teacher at the Music Hall lays down its ample platform : " Religion itself is one and the same. He that worships truly, by whatever form, worships the only God. He hears the prayer, whether called Brahma, Jehovah, Pan, or Lord, or called by no name at all. Each people has its prophets and its saints ; and many a swarthy Indian who bows down to wood and stone, — many a grim-faced Calmuck who worships the great god of storms, — many a Grecian peasant who did homage to Phœbus Apollo when the sun rose or went down, — yes, many a savage, his hands smeared all over with human sacrifice, shall come from the East and the West and sit down in the kingdom of God with Moses and Zoroaster, with Socrates and Jesus, while men who called daily on the only living God, who paid their tribute and bowed at the name of Christ, shall be cast out because they did no more : " — A somewhat florid and rather overdrawn paraphrase of Pope's *pantheonic* stanza : —

" Father of all ! in every age,  
In every clime adored,  
By saint, by savage, and by sage, —  
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord."

This is a looser latitudinarianism (at least when thus extended) than most persons would allow who still are content to worship only in the " high places " of an unchristianized faith, preferring the altar of the eldest son of Adam, wreathed with garlands and loaded with fruits of the earth, to that of Abel, red with the sacrificial blood-mark of the firstling of the flock. But this is nevertheless the legitimate ripeness of that

fruit. There is moreover a flippant, reckless defiance in these last forth-puttings of our late oracle, a spirit immeasurably beneath the appealing earnestness of the docile doubter. The sceptic struggling through the swelling seas of unbelief towards some shore of wished-for rest, and the sneerer plunging poisoned javelins at us, are never to be set in the same company. There is hope for the first, but little for the last. Now, however it may be with the mere sentimentalist, we are sure that no deeply thinking and feeling soul can ever be satisfied with this altogether too "universal" worship; this dream that some passing fervor of the imagination or even of the nervous system, transporting it above its ordinary tide-mark of emotion; that some sudden admiration of the marvels of creation — divine or human, — some thrill of gratification at heroic exploits or virtuous deeds, is really the loftiest homage to God of which we are capable. It must be persuaded that it does not worship as it can and should; that its teachers of this creed and cultus cannot lead it any nearer the Holy of Holies than it now is. Hence the terrible conflicts of this age, and the most trying in our centres of chiefest intellectual advance, between reason and faith, nature and grace; conflicts which nothing will ever rightly finish but the reconciling word of Christ.

We freely confess the fascinating charm which this devout naturalism throws over much of our current literature. Its language is a fair counterfeit of genuine devotion. Neither an outright contempt of revelation nor a total irreligiousness of life forms any barrier to the realizing, the expressing these sentiments, — tender, and thoughtful, and inspiring as are the strains they breathe. We listen, and it is almost as if an angel-voice were hymning its adoration before the throne. Many an earnest, holy heart had poured out the fulness of an accepted worship in words like these, never asking whether an Isaac Watts or Thomas Moore was their author:

" O Thou who dry'st the mourner's tear,  
How dark this world would be,  
If pierced by sins and sorrows here,  
We could not fly to Thee !

" Oh ! who could bear life's stormy doom,  
Did not Thy wing of love

Come brightly wafting thro' the gloom,  
Our peace-branch from above."

To the child of God, these have been, as they are and will be, the expression of his trust in the love, his leaning on the arm, of a Divine Supporter. He takes them as companions of his closet-hours, and they rise in praise to his lips as by faith he enters more deeply into the securities of the everlasting covenant. We cannot spare them from our hymn-books. Hardly could our truest Christian life give itself utterance more fitly than in some of these lyrics, as passing up to the higher Pisgahs of hope and assurance, the pearly gates of the Jerusalem above gleam purely on the vision through the clear, spiritual atmosphere. So properly do such effusions belong to experimental piety, that it inflicts a pang of sadness to remember that they are the offspring of unrenewed, unsanctified affections. Not that we charge a hypocritical pretending, a mere feigning of unfelt fervors. We regard them as the birth of some mood of passing melancholy, or excited ideality, destined, it may be, — like many a transient pulse of purer feeling, — to be speedily followed by a congenial, familiar indulgence in the dissipations of folly and sin. It is a strange phenomenon, and it seems more strange the longer we think of it, that pilgrims heavenward should be chanting the words of those who are plainly bound in the contrary direction. Shall we solve the mystery by admitting the dictum, that "everybody is good sometimes"? Nay, — except in a general sense of "natural goodness" which does not touch the centre of this inquiry. The imagination has its hours of intenser summer-light and warmth. The constitutional religiosity of some is excessive and easily moved. Moore could throw off stanzas fit for the praises of a white-robed choir of "the just made perfect," and finish the evening, just as spontaneously, with a bacchanal chorus reeking with sensual heats. So Byron could come down from his serious and almost prophet-like musings in Alpine solitudes to revel in the vice of Italian cities with only a yet keener zest. So the bird sings its sweetest song from out the blossoming tree-top, and the next moment is picking up its dinner of earth-worms from out the oozy mire. We are reminded of another of the modern Anacreon's "Sacred Songs": —

"The bird let loose in Eastern skies,  
 When hastening fondly home,  
 Ne'er stoops to earth her wing, nor flies  
 Where idle warblers roam.  
 But high she shoots through air and light  
 Above all low decay,  
 Where nothing earthly bounds her flight,  
 Nor shadow dims her way.

"So grant me, God, from every care  
 And stain of passion free,  
 Aloft through Virtue's purer air  
 To hold my course to thee !  
 No sin to cloud, no lure to stay  
 My soul, as home she springs, —  
 Thy sunshine on her joyful way,  
 Thy freedom in her wings."

The allusion is delicate ; the prayer is inimitable ; if the artist hand be more visible than the burning heart.\* Even more winning upon our sensibilities is the "Come, ye disconsolate," — though we must doubt if the poet's disconsolateness had anything to do with that "sorrow which needeth no repentance." But the melodies which genius inspires, graceless though it be, will linger around the heart, and in nights of loneliness and sorrow, and in mornings of returning joy, will help the confidence and the thanksgiving of the faint yet pursuing follower of the Lamb. Natural taste and sensibility the most exquisite we readily concede them. In a Christian soul they become the censer of a holy offering. What we deny is, that they are this in their originating source ; that they express any piety which is genuine, or can be the vehicle of any true devotion when associated with impure desires, vicious sympathies, an irreligious life. A chord is struck which gives forth, with surpassing pathos, a subdued, a melting harmony. An indescribable charm breathes through the deep, impassioned music. We turn to its creator and the illusion vanishes. No worship "in spirit and in truth" can ascend from the altars of unregenerate nature. No priesthood of Mammon or Belial or any of the

\* *Calvin's* seal had engraven on it a hand holding a burning heart, with the motto, "I give thee all! I keep back nothing for myself."



gods of flesh and sense can consecrate an offering at the shrine of Him whose name is the Holy One of Israel.

It is a question of more than a mere curiosity, it is one of most searching vitality, — what relation these views and speculations bear to the person and work of Jesus Christ? The general drift of our paper may have indicated what the answer to this inquiry must be. But it should have a more explicit response. And this shall be given by one of the high priestesses of this Delphic oracle, Margaret Fuller Ossoli. In the second volume of her *Life*, between the pages 88-92, we have these confessions: "Few believe more in Christ's history than myself; and it is very dear to me. I believe in the prophets, that they foreknew not only what their nation longed for, but what the developments of universal man requires — a Redeemer, an Atoner, a Lamb of God, taking away the sins of the world. I have no objection to the miracles, except where they do not happen to please one's feelings. Why should not a spirit so consecrate and intent develop new laws, and make matter plastic? I can imagine him walking the waves. He could not remain in the tomb, they say: certainly not; death is impossible to such a being. He ascended to heaven; surely, how could it be otherwise? I am grateful, here as everywhere, when spirit bears fruit in fulness; it attests the justice of aspiration, it kindles faith, it rebukes sloth, it enlightens resolve. But so does a beautiful infant. Christ's life is only one modification of the universal harmony. Ages may not produce one worthy to loose the shoes of the Prophet of Nazareth; yet there will surely be another manifestation of that Word who was in the beginning. Its very greatness demands a greater. As an Abraham called for a Moses, and a Moses for a David, so does Christ for another Ideal. We want a life more complete and various than that of Christ. We have had a Messiah to teach and reconcile; let us now have a Man to live out all the symbolical forms of human life, with the calm beauty of a Greek god, with the deep consciousness of a Moses, with the holy love and purity of Jesus. — 'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive,' if understood in the larger sense of every man his own Saviour, and Jesus only representative of the way we must walk to accomplish our destiny, is indeed a worthy gospel."

This hardly needs a comment. Yet if a reader of the page should be strongly arrested by its poetic fervors, should be inclined to think that there must be some pearl imbedded in these transcendental depths, a closing paragraph from the elaborate and suggestive volume on "Nature and the Supernatural," by Dr. Horace Bushnell, shall stand as the antidote to this subtle poison. — "There is no vestige of Christian life in the working plan of Nature: that is development. Christianity exists only to have a remedial action upon the contents and conditions of nature: this is regeneration. No one fatally departs from Christianity who rests the struggles of holy character on help supernatural from God. No one really is in it, however plausible the semblance of his approach to it, who rests in the terms of morality, or self-culture, or self-magnetizing practice." "For (as this writer has just before laid down the undeniable proposition) if there be any sufficient, infallible, and always applicable distinction that separates a Christian from one who is not, it is the faith practically held of a supernatural grace or religion."

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## ARTICLE VIII.

### LITERARY NOTICES.

*The Life of Trust*: being a Narrative of the Lord's dealings with George Muller. Written by himself. Edited and condensed by Rev. H. LINCOLN WAYLAND, with an Introduction by FRANCIS WAYLAND. Boston: Gould & Lincoln.

THIS book is an autobiography, written in the first person singular, and is of precisely such a character as to secure for itself popularity in the religious world of the present day. It claims to present to mankind a remarkable example of the efficacy of prayer as applied to a benevolent enterprise. While it claims to be a full biography, its main object is to show how Mr. Muller has succeeded in obtaining the means for establishing and maintaining in Bristol, England, an extensive Orphan House, solely by prayer and faith, without *asking* a single individual for the contribution of a penny to

the enterprise. The benefit of dependent orphans was, however, as the author declares, only a secondary object of this undertaking. Its primary object was to set up something before the world and the Church, which should serve as an ocular demonstration that God hears prayer. Mr. Muller says "it needed something which could be seen by the natural eye, to strengthen the faith of God's children and to convince the unconverted of the reality of religion." And he believed that if he, a *poor* man, were to erect and carry on a very large asylum for orphans, simply by prayer and faith, without asking a single individual for money, this would accomplish the desired object.

*No man was to be asked.* This was the hinge on which the faith-producing virtue of the whole thing, under God, was to depend. And hence this point was strictly adhered to from first to last. True, he proceeded, in all other respects, in the usual way. It was indeed publicly known that his plan was to *ask* no one for a penny. But this did not matter. Mr. Muller succeeded, through many trials; and the faith-giving element was preserved. And now how important it is that the whole believing and unbelieving world should look upon this latter-day monument of God's fidelity, and have their faith strengthened and their unbelief removed. Or if that cannot be, how important that, in the place thereof, this book should be circulated throughout the Christian world, and stand side by side with the Bible as a text-book of religious appeal.

This seems presumptuous indeed, and yet it is the conclusion which the positions of the book have forced upon us. We do not doubt that Mr. Muller is right in thinking that the people of the present day desire something remarkable in religion that can be seen by the natural eye, but whether he is right in conceiving that they *need* it, and that it is God's purpose to give it, is not quite so clear. He says that he himself desired to *see* as clearly as daylight that God was leading him onward; and we do not doubt this, for the feeling is a very natural one. But we had supposed that the desire to *see* had long since been indulged to the appointed limit, and that it is incumbent upon Christians now to walk by faith and not by sight.

We could wish that Mr. Muller had informed us more distinctly in regard to one or two points. He is anxious that we should not regard him as having the *gift* of faith, mentioned in 1 Cor. 12: 9, in connection with the "gift of healing," and the "working of miracles," but only the *grace* of faith, such as every Christian may have; and yet he has put his case forth as a special one, expressly for its effect upon the world and the Church, standing parallel with the gifts of

healing and of miracles. He thinks it is proved that his faith is an ordinary grace, by the fact that it extends also to other things as well as the matter of the Orphan House. As, for instance, he declares that the Lord has not suffered him, for the last twenty-five years, to doubt that he is a Christian; also, when he loses anything, as a key, for example, he asks the Lord to direct him to it, and expects an answer. These proofs may be conclusive to his mind, but they are not quite so to ours. If his is an ordinary exercise of faith, we are to regard it of course as an example for us; and the inference would be, that Mr. Muller would have all solicitations of money for missionary and benevolent purposes henceforth suspended, and money raised solely by prayer and faith. Besides, if this is an ordinary kind of faith, we would like to be informed how Mr. Muller knew that God would sanction his building an Orphan Asylum to stand, in distinction from everything else, as a monument to the truth that he hears prayer. And how did he know that God would have him refrain from asking any one for money. He does not tell us that he consulted the Lord in regard to either of these points. Indeed, he says "it seemed to *him* that the object would be best gained by establishing an Orphan House." He declares, as a matter of his own judgment exclusively, that it needed to be something which could be seen by the natural eye, and that in establishing and carrying on an Orphan House the end would be best secured. But he asserts that this was not the *gift* of faith, and we do not suppose it was. Yet, if it was not, what was it?

It will be asked, How can it be accounted for that he received such an immense amount of funds without asking for a penny? We answer that we are not obliged, if we had space, to show by what natural principles a remarkable phenomenon can be solved in order to prove that it is not of God. If it is unsupported by the Word of God, that is enough. We frankly confess ourselves unable to reduce Mr. Muller's enterprise to Bible principles. We think it is easy to see also many natural principles which might combine to produce the result. The undertaking was a novel one. It claimed to be an instance of remarkable reliance on God, and to have momentous interests at stake. The fact being known that Mr. Muller would not, in any case, ask for a penny for the accomplishment of his object, and yet that he had perfect confidence in its fulfilment, was just calculated to attract the offerings of the pious and benevolent. There are many remarkable characters in the world whose action is not reducible to common laws, who have also no particular connection with supernatural or spiritual influences. We believe God answers prayer by giving success to the natural means to secure the object prayed

for. But we are not ready to admit that he sanctions any experiments which are made at the present day for the express purpose of proving that he is a faithful God. These proofs are recorded in his Word.

Mr. Muller belongs, we understand, to the body known in England as the Plymouth Brethren. The volume is a very readable one, the style being quaint and simple, while the work of the editor appears to have been judiciously done, and the publishers have manifested their usual good taste in the mechanical execution of their work.

*The Crucible; or, Tests of a Regenerate State.* Designed to bring to light Suppressed Hopes, expose False Ones, and confirm the True. By REV. J. A. GOODHUE, A. M. With an Introduction, by 'REV. EDWARD N. KIRK, D. D. Boston: Gould & Lincoln. 1861. pp. 352.

WE are glad to see this new edition of a most valuable treatise. Of all the religious books of an experimental character, published within the last ten years, there is no one which we have seen possessing higher claims to attention than this. Such is our judgment, after a careful perusal, from the commencement of the first chapter to the close of the last. The subject is one of paramount importance in every age of the Church, and the treatment of it in these pages is original, discriminating, sober, and eminently Scriptural. It is not, as some critics have seemed to suppose, a *theory*, constructed by the author in the retirement of his library, but an embodiment of the fruits of an earnest and painful pastoral experience,—a careful and elaborate induction from a great multitude of facts seen in the clear light of God's word. It is strictly Baconian. Thus when he asserts that a child already converted, but having no hope, will express himself in such and such ways, it is not because he thinks it ought to be so, or that the Bible says it, but it is that he has uniformly found it so; and that which he has found in the child's talk, the expression of his views and feelings respecting himself, and the peculiar tenor and tone of his self-exclusion from the pale of Christians, or the rejection of religious hope, admits of no Scriptural solution except on the supposition that regeneration has already taken place. So also in the case of an adult, actually converted, but destitute of a hope, our author believes he finds, not unfrequently, Scriptural evidence of regeneration partly in some things which, according to the conventional notions on the subject, would be set down on the other side. The following extract will illustrate:

"In the state of unacknowledged regeneration, this inward compunction induces a melancholy seriousness, and repeated struggles for deliverance and peace. In the other states, in some exceptional cases, the person is impelled by the same cause to an opposite course of life. He seeks for peace by striving, not to obey, but to stifle the dictates of his quickened conscience. He tries not to hearken to the utterances of God, which are constantly falling upon his ear from within and without, but to silence them. The result is, he lives a life of contention with God and the monitions of his own enlightened nature. He betakes himself to apparent opposition to religion, to immoral practices and irreligious society, not because he despises things that are good, but to quell the commotions of his troubled soul. Thus he lives on, in utter abandonment of religious things, except as he is impelled, by the disquiet of his quickened but unadjusted nature, to oppose them, until, being unable to maintain the contest longer, he is brought, by some particular providence and by the Spirit of God, to cease the strife, and yield himself to Christ in a sweet submissiveness unfelt before.

"An instance in illustration is that of a lady already mentioned as endeavoring to suppress the uprisings of the new life within, by seeking to find out inconsistencies in the Bible. When afflicted by the death of a child, her heart rose in opposition to God's dealing in the event. She declared it was unjust. He had no right to deprive her of her child. She could not and would not endure it. But her opposition, too keen to be continued long, was soon broken, and melted into the sweetness of complete submission, which resulted in a public profession of religion, her original experience being referred to a period seven years prior to these events."—p. 49, 50.

Although the Treatise is not doctrinal in form, it distinctly recognizes, throughout, the old foundations, exalting Christ as King on his throne, and making the sinner's salvation, from first to last, a matter of peculiar and sovereign grace. The style is singularly concise and clear, and the tone that of a man in earnest and who knows whereof he affirms. Any person pondering sincerely and anxiously the question of his own religious state, with a desire, above all things, to stand on the true foundation, may derive invaluable aid from the perusal of Mr. Goodhue's work. We desire also to commend it to the special attention of the pastors of our churches. They will find it helpful in the performance of some of their most important and most difficult duties, both in the pulpit and in pastoral intercourse.

It is divided into three Parts. Part I. treats of Unrecognized Regeneration; or, Faith without Hope. Part II., of Unrecognized Regeneration; or, Hope without Faith; and Part III., of Recognized Regeneration; or, Faith and Hope. We hope, at another time, to enter somewhat fully into the discussion of this important subject, in a more extended review of Mr. Goodhue's discriminating and excellent Treatise.

*The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World ; from Marathon to Waterloo.* By E. S. CREASY, M. A., Professor of Ancient and Modern History in University College, London ; late Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. 12mo. pp. 364. New York : Harper & Brothers.

THE chronology of History is made out on the battle field, and civilization has worked outward from these bloody centres. Prof. Creasy has wisely seized on these facts and written one of those few books fitted for the earlier students in history. It starts on the true philosophy of beginning with outlines, and the osteology of the great body of Universal History. A large part of the earlier reading and research in this field is lost in the minuteness and indiscriminateness of the gathering, and in an inability to grade events, as great and small, and to locate them in the relations of cause and effect. The writers of this class of reading have not made the pivots prominent around which nations have revolved for good or ill. Prof. Creasy shows us fifteen of these, standing up among the centuries. They are as a line of military posts through a territory. A tolerable mastery of them gives one the mastery of the entire field, or at least makes the conquest systematic and easy. These points in history being fixed, one reckons to and from them in his reading in this department ; he locates the facts he acquires, and is thus able, in his philosophy of history, to connect the development of principles, and the show of progress and decline in nations with their true causes.

In the volume before us, the battles named are not only well delineated, but they are connected by a running synopsis of events occurring between each two. Thus the reader is put in possession of a continuous history without being confused by an accumulation of unimportant items, while he is taking possession of the few great central facts and causes. The choice of these battles must have been difficult, though we think fortunate in the main. Probably no two authors would have taken these identical fifteen, no more and no less for such a volume.

Those selected are as follows : Marathon, B. C. 490 ; Syracuse, 413 ; Arbela, 331 ; Metaurus, 207 ; Armenius, A. D. ; 9 Châlons, 451 ; Tours, 732 ; Hastings, 1066 ; Joan of Arc's, 1429 ; Spanish Armada, 1588 ; Blenheim, 1704 ; Pultowa, 1709 ; Saratoga, 1777 ; Valmy, 1792 ; and Waterloo, 1815.

The volume is worthy to be revised into a primary Text Book in Universal History.



*Evenings with the Doctrines.* By NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D. Boston : Gould & Lincoln. 1861. pp. 415.

THIS beautiful volume contains the substance of seventeen familiar Tuesday evening lectures. The important leading doctrines of the Gospel are clearly stated and proved in a way to render them easily understood, and in a style that is eminently practical and attractive. The discourses are exceedingly interesting, abounding in striking and original thoughts. Those who are accustomed to regard the discussion of doctrines as necessarily dry and forbidding, can here have their mistake fully corrected. We think the book a very useful and timely one. While its reading cannot fail to remove difficulties and promote the piety of Christians, it must interest the Church anew in the reëxamination of the great principles which are so essential to intelligent and steadfast piety. And what can be of more importance in these times of drifting into dangerous speculations and superficial reading and thinking?

We sincerely wish the volume could go into every Christian family.

THERE have been laid on our table, too late for careful notice in this number, books as follows :

Rawlinson's *Historical Evidences of the Truth of the Scripture Records.* 1860. pp. 454. Gould & Lincoln.

*Things not Generally Known.* Edited by David A. Wells, and published by D. Appleton & Co. 1860. pp. 432.

*The Pulpit of the American Revolution.* Introduction, Notes, &c. by John Wingate Thornton. Gould & Lincoln. 1860. pp. 537.

*Vindication of New England Churches.* By John Wise. Cong. Board of Publication. 1860. pp. 245.

*The Benefits of Christ's Death.* By Aonio Paleareo. Republished by Gould & Lincoln. 1860. pp. 160.

## ARTICLE IX.

## SHORT SERMONS.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor," &c. — *Isaiah* 61: 1; *Luke* 4: 18, 19.

WHAT a doctrinal, practical, and fervent sermon our Saviour must have preached from this text on his visit to his native town Nazareth!

As he showed who were meant by "The Captives," "The Blind," "The Bruised," and brought out clearly the state of the "broken-hearted," the means of "deliverance" and healing, and specially as he pressed *now* as "the acceptable" time, what mind could have remained uninstructed, and what heart unmoved. "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." It was a solemn sermon, and one to try the heart. And yet the poor, blind, captive souls were not savingly benefited. Such is the "deceitful and desperately wicked" condition of man's heart! They began to say, "Is not this Joseph's son?" And to show them to themselves, Jesus brought out the doctrine of divine sovereignty; whereupon they were filled with murderous wrath, and they could not have remained ignorant of their guilty and lost state. What food for serious reflection and deep feeling is here both for ministers and hearers!

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"With whom is no variableness," — *James* 1: 17.

THE word rendered *variableness* is in the Greek, *παράλλαξις*, from which comes the striking astronomical term *parallax*. The stars that are so inconceivably distant that they appear precisely in the same position from the opposite sides of the earth's orbit, are said to have no *parallax*, no angle of difference, and so nothing can be told of their size, place, or orbit.

Here is a striking presentation of the *immutability* of God. No distances of time or place cause him to vary in the least possible angle or degree. To the eye of man on the earth and of Gabriel in glory God is, and will ever be, the same; and it is but natural and right that both should fall on their faces and adore and worship. He dwells in light unapproachable and full of glory. "Praise ye the Lord; praise ye the name of the Lord; praise him, O ye servants of the Lord."

## ARTICLE X.

## THE ROUND TABLE.

CRUMBS and half-loaves, bits and pieces, odds and ends, this and that, and some other things, seeds and fruits, scions, prunings, and dead sticks, *multa et alia, et cetera*, will accumulate on an Editorial Table.

We propose to clear and dust ours with the issue of each number of the "REVIEW." This little corner is reserved, in which we may shake hands all round, with or without gauntlet, as others may incline. We mean well, shall try to do well, and only ask a hearing before a verdict.

INFORMATION has been given to some extent in this region that "the anxious friends of some theology in New England, *that is older than any now extant*, are about to issue a new 'Boston Review.'"

"Older," very like than any extant in certain limited circles, and so not known to him who has thus kindly volunteered to advertise for us gratuitously. Yet we cannot reconcile this saying with a newspaper campaign of many years against a theology in New England now assumed to be dead and gone. However, we must not probably always put this and that very close together, even when taken from the same religious sheet. If we publish nothing older than the times of the Apostles, we hope to be pardoned of good men, even if what we present is new to them in their circle.

WE have it on the authority of a deacon that a young minister, fresh from seminary lore, being much averse to the preaching of doctrines or principles, soon found it difficult to know what *to* preach; subjects grew scarce. He finally commenced a course of sermons on Mark 1: 30. "But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever," &c. 1st sermon, Who was *Simon*? 2d sermon, Simon had a wife. 3d sermon, Who was Simon's wife's *mother*? 4th sermon, Simon's wife's mother *lay sick*. 5th sermon, Simon's wife's mother lay sick *of a fever*.

At the close of the fifth sermon, as he was walking out of the church with one of his good old deacons, the bell unexpectedly struck. Upon the minister's asking the cause, the deacon quietly replied that he did not exactly know, but guessed that Peter's wife's mother was dead, as she had been sick now for several weeks.

WE feel grateful for an unsolicited, though not unexpected, and quite *Independent* advertisement of our doings and purposes. We feel much inclined to pay the usual price for this more than column of helpful notice, and think another such would put in funds to do it.

Though we were not conscious of conspiring for a "division movement" among the Churches, we doubt not this Religious Journal is right in divining our unborn motives. We receive humbly the rebuke from so *peaceful* and devout a sheet.

We are also kindly shown by it our wrongdoing in presuming to own and publish a *Review* in *Boston*. "There is to be a new *Review*, and *Boston* is to be its centre." We confess it, we had forgotten that New England is provincial, and only reserved to produce men and manuscripts and funds to be manifested elsewhere. We ought to have taken counsel, if not permission, of those whose readers and admirers are as numerous as the legions of Titus that beleaguered the Holy City. But we promise to remember.

The only thing in this long advertisement of our doings and plans that calls forth an exclamation-point, is, that there should be any difference of opinion between brethren in "reference to a publication which never yielded any remuneration to its proprietor!" And so it seems strange to some that Christian men should struggle for anything that does not pay in "current money with the merchant." Well, it is a provincial notion, still extant in some parts of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, that some things, as moral and religious principles for example, are worth an effort, even if the labor does not pay in federal currency.

It is news in this out-of-the-way place that "a few years ago" an *Independent* "appeal to the Churches against a divisive theological controversy, and the exposure of the secret plot, paralyzed the movement" to establish the *American Theological Review*. For that Review was established here, and those who did it do not now recollect the reception of any paralytic shock at the time, though doubtless many shocking things were then done in some places.

We have peculiar, perhaps improper, views and feelings, in being thus judged and condemned in advance of publication. Yet we have always thought much of that profound practical remark of Sidney Smith, that he never read a book before reviewing it, because it prejudiced one so.

*The Round Table is dusted.*